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WILLIAM COTTON OSWELL

Most affectionately Yours
W C Oswell

LAST PORTRAIT

# WILLIAM COTTON OSWELL

## Hunter and Explorer

*THE STORY OF HIS LIFE*

WITH CERTAIN CORRESPONDENCE AND EXTRACTS FROM THE PRIVATE JOURNAL OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE, HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED


BY HIS ELDEST SON

W. EDWARD OSWELL

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW


With an Introduction

BY

FRANCIS GALTON

D.C.L., F.R.S., F.R.G.S., ETC.

PORTRAITS, MAPS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II


LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1900

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P. 137, fifth line from bottom, *for* 'we' *read* 'he.'
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# WILLIAM COTTON OSWELL

## CHAPTER X.

### ENGLAND.

1852–1853. AGE 34–35.

John as a coachman—A projected African expedition abandoned—Letter from Livingstone; 'I should have burst into a regular roar;' 'an unruly dissenter;' 'I won't smuggle'—La Société de Géographie de Paris award Oswell medal for discovery of Ngami—London Missionary Society's recognition of his assistance to Livingstone—Letter from Brooke Cunliffe; 'Cumming exaggerated;' 'Harris lied intensely;' 'Professor Owen's unapproachable paw'—'Why doesn't Oswell earn R.G.S.'s gold medal by publishing?'—He destroys his African journals—Shyness or chivalry?

'On arriving in England,' writes Oswell, 'I left John in London and went down to my brother's. He hesitated about my henchman, thinking a real, live black man would hardly suit the household of a country clergyman. But his coachman fell sick. Could John drive? I should think so, he was the best eight-in-hander in Cape Town! Down he came, and in half an hour was perfectly established in the family. My brother declared he never had such a coachman, and was very kind to him, timidly at first. The cook taught him

writing; the lady's-maid went on with his reading. I shall not forget meeting him with the two women, one on either arm, chatting with them in the most accomplished style.'

It had been Oswell's intention to remain in England for eight or nine months and then return to Africa, and in conjunction with Livingstone, carry out the project which, for the reasons detailed, had been temporarily abandoned in the preceding year. But he found his brother very ill, and craving for his companionship, affection and support, and accordingly he made up his mind, for the present at all events, to put any thought of Africa aside. He sent John back after a six months' sojourn, giving him a letter for Livingstone, announcing his decision and the grounds of it. Meanwhile Livingstone's account of events since his friend's departure had arrived:

'Cape Town,
'*April* 27, 1852.

'. . . Mrs. L. and family sailed only on the 23rd inst. on board the *Trafalgar*, Captain Robertson. She seems a fine ship, and the company on board appear respectable, so I committed my cares to their keeping for a while. The children got colds just before embarking. It was only with the greatest difficulty I could restrain my sorrow in parting; had I given way in the least, I should have burst into a regular roar. . . . Mr. Thompson pressed me so much to give him something to read to his people, I at last consented, and gave him the rough copy of the letter to the Geographical Society, and after reading it to his people he put it into the *Commercial Advertiser*. I put a preface to it as to what we had done in opening up a market for commerce on the Zouga and Seshéké, and in it I told the dear public that neither you nor I had gained anything but loss. I know you don't like me to say anything about you, but what else can you expect from an unruly dissenter! I hear nothing of the map

which I sent from the Zouga along with yours. I fear it has shared the same fate as yours. I made enquiries after yours at the Postmaster General's, and he told me it had not yet arrived. . . . Another thing detains me here—permission to take what powder I need, and three guns. Mr. Darling said I must apply to the Governor as I passed through Graham's Town, and he had no doubt but General Cathcart would grant it. He thought that my route runs through Caffreland, evidently. I would much rather not have had anything to do with these bigwigs, but I must have some powder, and I won't smuggle. If the answer does not come down by next mail I shall go without powder, but it is rather hard seeing I shall remain two years in. Shall I see you? Please do write if you think of coming in from either coast. Only think! Captain Tuckey gives a vocabulary of the dialects on the river Zaire, and among many others which we know, there stands staring at us Mokanjui's favourite Mabotabota with very little alteration. . . . Your cook George Fleming proposes to go up country on his own account some months hence. Mr. Rutherford seems to approve of the plan and so I think will give him goods to trade with. . . . If you wish it I might detain George for you supposing you came from the West. I shall certainly try either the East or the West coast. I hope you found your brother better in health. I shall write to you in going up, and again when I get in. I entreat you to write soon.'

Not only did Oswell make no bid for popular recognition, but he was at elaborate pains to keep entirely in the background, and persistently refused the applications which rained in upon him for lectures, articles and papers. It was therefore a surprise and gratification to him to receive the following letter, and the handsome medal that accompanied it, from La Société de Géographie de Paris :

(*Translation.*)

'23, RUE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ,
'PARIS,
'*April* 5, 1852.

'SIR,

'The Geographical Society of Paris, at a general meeting on Friday, the 2nd inst., heard read the Report presented to them by M. Jomard in the name of the Committee appointed to adjudicate in the competition for the annual prize for the most important discovery in Geography. This Committee, which was charged with the duty of directing its investigations principally to the journeys of discovery undertaken in the course of the year 1849, has reported most favourably on the

OBVERSE MEDAL.

REVERSE MEDAL.

important results of your last exploration in the interior of Africa. Agreeably with the conclusions of this Report, the Society has awarded you a large silver medal for your discovery of Lake Ngami. A similar medal has been awarded to your learned fellow traveller, the Reverend David Livingstone. We hasten to forward you this medal; pray accept it as a token of our hearty interest in your useful labours, and as some small recompense of

your enlightened zeal for the progress of Geographical Science.

'We have the honour to offer you, sir, with our most sincere congratulations, the assurance of our most distinguished consideration.

'AÉ. MATHIEU,
'Rear-Admiral and President of the Society.

'SÉDILLOR,
'Secretary of the Society.

'W. P. GUIGNIANT,
'Member of the Institute and President of the Central Committee.

'DE LA ROQUETTE,
'General Secretary of the Central Committee.'

The London Missionary Society too, feeling that the constant assistance rendered to their representative ought not to pass unnoticed, sent him, through their foreign secretary, the following courteous and grateful acknowledgment:

*Dr. Tidman to W. C. Oswell.*

'MISSION HOUSE,
'BLOMFIELD STREET,
'FINSBURY,
'*July* 10, 1852.

'SIR,

'Having only very recently learnt from Mrs. Livingstone your present address, I avail myself of the earliest opportunity for making the present communication. In the successive journeys undertaken by the Rev. Dr. Livingstone in South Africa, with a view to the extension of Missionary operations in a Northerly direction, beyond the

limits hitherto reached by foreigners, you have rendered such generous and efficient aid to our excellent and devoted friend, that the Directors of the London Missionary Society feel constrained to express to you their deep sense of obligation. It would be unnecessary on the present occasion to discuss the various objects of interest and importance, both scientific and philanthropic, which are involved in the ultimate results of these arduous undertakings. That the cause of Science as well as the highest social interests of humanity will be promoted by the energetic and successful efforts of yourself and your companion in travel, the Directors cannot entertain a doubt. . . . But for your valuable services, of which Dr. Livingstone has in his correspondence repeatedly expressed his very grateful appreciation, our Missionary would scarcely have ventured upon enterprises involving so much peril and responsibility, or, if undertaken, they must have failed to realize the measure of success which has attended them. Did not feelings of delicacy both to yourself and Dr. Livingstone restrain us from adverting more particularly to many acts of disinterestedness and generosity rendered by you to your fellow traveller, thereby relieving him from much anxiety, it would have been gratifying to have made them the subject of special reference and acknowledgment. . . . Allow me to repeat in the name of the Directors of the London Missionary Society the expression of their cordial thanks for your great and valuable services rendered in the prosecution of these arduous undertakings, and with every sentiment of respect and esteem

'I remain, sir,

'Yours very truly,

'ARTHUR TIDMAN, D.D.'

Dr. Tidman acquainted Livingstone with the action of the Society, and in his next despatch to them, written from the banks of the *Zouga*, and dated November 2, 1852, he says: 'The notice taken of Mr. Oswell by the

Directors has been highly gratifying to my feelings. By a letter from Mrs. L. I find he is still anxious to befriend us.'

Meanwhile Oswell was being urged on all sides, by relatives, friends, and from official sources, to write an account of his wanderings:

*Brooke Cunliffe, H.E.I.C.S., to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'MADRAS,
'*Sept.* 9, 1852.

'. . . I was very glad to hear from you, though as our old master Ashton would say, "place not mentioned." You would indeed "amuse me for half an hour," and a good deal longer, by recounting your adventures, but now I do trust that you are not going to bury them in your own breast, but that you will give them to the world. Interesting they will be, and more than that, decidedly useful in extending our knowledge of this fair globe. You should get into the Travellers'; indeed, they should make you an Honorary Member for all that you have seen and gone through. I know your dislike of coming δεικτικῶς before the world, but really it has become your duty now to communicate your knowledge to others. I have only dipped here and there into Cumming's book, and did not like the style: "Come now, softly old girl, take it easy," to the lioness that confronted him, κ. τ. λ. I am told that he was given to exaggerate too, and it is now pretty well confessed that Harris lied intensely; so that we want, what we shall get if you undertake it, a fair relation. However, if you intend to remain silent, pray give me a few lines shewing the extent of your travels in latitude, etc., that I may dot you off on the map. Did you see any new animal, any *Megaloceros Oswellii*, or *Dinornis Cottonii*, or *Megatherium Gulielmi*, or bring anything to book for the first time? If you have brought any τρόπαια or *reliquiæ* home, I suppose you have taken

means to bring them before the world. Richard Owen is long ahead of anyone else, and has a paw which in clutching a femur, or manipulating the nerves and muscles of a scorpion (see one thus treated, which I sent home, in the College of Surgeons), is unapproachable. You must make his acquaintance, and learn what gigantic knowledge goes hand in hand with most unassuming manners and modesty. . . . If you don't return to Africa, and are determined to wander again, why not try Upper India? there's much delight and much sport and many an undiscovered nook in Nepal, the Terai and the lower ranges of the glorious Himalaya; after which you can revel in the Snowy Range. The scenery is beautiful, and I know not whither I would rather go, if independence, time and the wherewithal, would only favour me. I am afraid there is nothing worth your acceptance in this Presidency. The Neilgherries have been almost cleared out, except on the Koondahs, and there again you want the diversity of game existing towards the North. Elephants too are getting scarce; the fear they once shed around has passed away, and any young fellow who has passed a year or two in Coimbatoor, Madura or Tinnevelly now thinks it no great thing to bag his tusker from out the herd of females. You say you regret, on the whole, having left the service. You may be right, but in truth promotion is so slow and the duties in such petty detail and of such a *tontine* nature, that for my part I cannot think you have lost anything it would be desirable to retain. Would you willingly return to cutcherry with the old humdrum of H. of 1816, or the long spun out yarn regarding the possession of $\frac{5}{16}$ths of an acre? This too with only one month's holiday out of twelve—too short to enjoy or execute any plan or excursion. . . . I still go on with racquets at the Club; but *non sum qualis eram* in the old court of Cuddalore. . . . You see what a stave I have written you and that I have not forgotten

the days that are past, when we used to go up the Avenue together, after snipe, or take the dogs out. Now God be with you.'

'Why doesn't your friend Oswell publish the journals he kept in Africa, or prepare a paper for us about his explorations?' asked one of the leading members of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society of Mr. James Macleay. 'Tell him, when you see him, that we are keeping our gold medal for him, but we must have some memoranda from himself.' Mr. Macleay hastened to repeat this to Oswell, joining his own earnest persuasion that he would comply with the suggestion; but he put the matter aside with a smile, saying: 'No, I won't write a line; I know quite well that Livingstone is working hard at his book; he wants this medal, let him have it; it means more to him than it could ever mean to me.'

Another member of the Council called upon him, and pointed out that his attitude was Quixotic, inasmuch as a mere paper from him could not seriously affect any book Livingstone was writing, or interfere with any favours the Society contemplated bestowing on him; but his resolution remained unshaken. 'However wretched my attempt might be,' he said, 'as I am the only man in England who can speak with authority on the part of Africa we visited together, I should take the wind out of my good friend's sails, and I would not do that for the world.' Shortly after this he was struck down with a severe attack of fever, and fearing that during coma, or in the event of his death, publication might be attempted, he ordered his note-books to be brought to his bedside, and himself cut out every page of importance, and had them burned in his presence.

'Oswell,' writes Mr. Francis Galton to Judge Hughes, 'was too shy and modest, and could not be induced to take that prominent share in those stirring times of the

Geographical Society which was his right, and which he was often urged to take.'

Shyness perhaps, modesty certainly, disposed him to keep in the background; but it was more than this—a noble chivalry, surely—that prompted him to hide his own light completely, that his friend's might in the darkness appear to shine a little brighter.

## CHAPTER XI.

### RETROSPECT OF HIS AFRICAN CAREER, AND THE OPINION OF HIM HELD BY CONTEMPORARY TRAVELLERS.

Romance of his life—Praise of companions, servants, natives, dogs, horses, and gun—'I was a good rider, but never a crack shot'—Incredible abundance of game—Sensation at time of accidents—Fascination in recollection—Livingstone, the Fabius of South African travel—His original view of sport—Gradual, but complete change—Kafirs' opinion of Oswell's courage—Mr. Webb's testimony to him—Sir Samuel Baker's; Nimrod *par excellence;* pioneer of civilization.

AFRICA was the romance of William Oswell's life. The glorious climate restored him to health and vigour; and he was able to gratify beyond all dreams and anticipations his love of horses and dogs, his passion for sport, riding, shooting, for seeing men, for danger and adventure. In a retrospect of the happy years spent there, he says:

'I was in the saddle for ten or twelve hours a day for close upon five seasons; I was never ill for a single day—laid up occasionally after an accident, but that was all; I had the best of companions, Murray, Vardon, Livingstone, and capital servants who stuck to me throughout. To tell the good deeds of one of them—my henchman John—through a five years' wandering, would very often be to

show up my own faults; let it be enough to say that he was a perfect servant to a very imperfect master, who now that his friend is dead, feels that he did not value him half enough, though he never loved man more. I never had to raise a hand against a native, and my foot only once, when I found a large, lazy fellow poking his paw into my sugar tin. If I remember right I never lost anything by theft, and I have had tusks of elephants shot eighty miles from the wagons, duly delivered. One chief, and one only, wanted to hector a little, but he soon gave it up. And with the rest of the potentates and people I was certainly a *persona grata*, for I filled their stomachs, and thus, as they assured me, in some mysterious way made their hearts white. I may say now, I suppose, that I was a good rider and got quickly on terms with my game. I was however never a crack shot, and not very well armed according to modern notions, though I still have the highest opinion of a Purdey of 10-bore which burnt five or six drachms of fine powder, and at short distances drove its ball home. This gun did nearly all my work. . . . We had no breechloaders in those days save the disconnecting one, and that would have been useless, for we had to load as we galloped through the thick bush, and the stock and barrel would soon have been wrenched asunder or so strained as to prevent their coming accurately into contact again. In the part of Africa I was in, at all events, your success depends enormously on your steed, for the country generally is too open for stalking, and he carries you up to your game, in most instances as near as you like, and it is your own fault if you don't succeed. Had I been the best shot that ever looked along a rifle, and made of steel, I could have done but a trifle without horses, in comparison with what I accomplished with them. Armed as I was with a smooth bore, not very true with heavy charges at over thirty yards, it was a necessity to get as near my game as possible. I am not vain of my shooting; I can do pretty well what I intend

SEVEN DIFFERENT KINDS OF ANIMALS WERE WITHIN VIEW . . . TOGETHER THERE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN FEWER THAN THREE THOUSAND.

at from ten to twenty-five yards, but I would have given the best shot in the world, without horses, very long odds; besides, from the saddle you see so much more of the country, and are so much more at your ease, and your attention for everything that surrounds you is so much more free. On horseback your whole day is a pleasure to you, mind and body, whereas on your legs it is often a wearisome, unsuccessful tramp.'

'It was through the fidelity of our dogs that we were able to sleep in comparative ease and safety. At the first sound or smell of danger they went to the fore, and walked barking round and round with the lions, just keeping clear of their spring or sudden rush, showing them they were detected, and that the camp was not all asleep. In the times I am writing of I don't think it would have been possible, save with a large number of armed watchers, and fires, to keep your oxen in anything like safety without dogs. You went to sleep in peace as soon as the dog-watch was set and the fires made up for the night.'

Africa in those days, mainly in the neighbourhood of the rivers, swarmed and teemed with animal life to an extent which, vouched for by anybody less anxiously truthful than Oswell, would appear incredible:

'On the plains between the Orange and Molopo rivers,' he writes, 'springbucks were met with in vast herds. For an hour's march with the wagons—say two miles and a quarter—I once saw them thicker than I ever saw sheep; they were to be counted only by tens of thousands. When we reached the Molopo seven different kinds of animals were within view—some, especially the quaggas and the buffaloes, in large herds—springbuck, hartebeests, etc., filling in the picture; together there could not have been fewer than three thousand. Fifteen miles beyond the Molopo to the north in the well-wooded and watered

valley of the Ba-Katla, rhinoceros and giraffe were abundant. Indeed, it was so full of game of all kinds that it put me in mind of the children's pictures of Adam naming the beasts in the garden of Eden—more animals than bushes. Eight or ten days from Lake Kamadou I came upon a herd of at least four hundred elephants standing drowsily in the shade of the detached clumps of mimosa trees. As far as the eye could reach in a fairly open country there was nothing but elephants. I do not mean in serried masses, but in small groups. I may put the abundance of game in some way intelligibly if I say that in most parts, with horses, one gun could easily have kept eight hundred men—six hundred we tried—fattened and supplied with a store sufficient to last for months.

'I am sorry now for all the fine old beasts I have killed, but I was young then, there was excitement in the work, I had large numbers of men to feed; and if these are not considered sound excuses for slaughter, the regret is lightened by the knowledge that every animal I shot, save three elephants, was eaten by man, and so put to a good use.

'People have often asked me how I felt at the time of the accidents. Much as other men would, I suppose, is all I can reply. We all belong to the same family. When trouble threatens, you shoot very straight, your muscles are rigid and steely *for the time;* if you come to grief the whole of your mind is bent on getting away, and on that only. Some men have more of their wits about them than others, no doubt; but all palefaces must yield to the black skins in this particular.

'There is a fascination to me in the remembrance of the past in all its connections; the free life, the self-dependence, the boring into what was then a new country; the feeling, as you lay under your kaross, that you were looking at the stars from a point on the earth whence no other European had ever seen them; the hope that every patch of bush, every little rise, was the only thing between

I CAME UPON A HERD OF AT LEAST FOUR HUNDRED ELEPHANTS.

you and some strange sight or scene—these are with me still; and were I not a married man with children and grandchildren, I believe I should head back into Africa again and end my days in the open air.'

'A few words about my companion in my Zambesi journey. . . . One trait in his character was, to do whatever he had set his mind on. In an Englishman we might, I think, have called the phase obstinacy, but with Livingstone it was "Scottishness." It was not the *sic volo sic jubeo* style of imperiousness, but a quiet determination to carry out his own views in his own way, without feeling himself bound to give a reason or explanation further than that he intended doing so and so. This was an immense help to him, for it made him supremely self-reliant, and if he had not been, he could never have done half that he did. He was the Fabius of African travel—*vicit cunctando* might well be his epitaph. He believed, as I do, that the way was to be won, not forced, if any good results were to follow. I have sat seven weeks with him on the bank of a swamp, because he was unwilling to run counter to the wishes of the people. I pressed him to move on with the horses; no active opposition would have been offered, but he would not wound the prejudices of the natives—and he was right. . . . With his quiet endurance and entire lack of fussiness and excitability, content to wait and let patience have her perfect work, quite satisfied that the day should bring forth what it liked, he was eminently the *justum et tenacem propositi virum* on whom man or elements make but slight impression, yet strangely withal very enthusiastic. This nature fitted him for the successful traveller and trustworthy companion. His inner man and noble aspirations belong to the histories of his life. We were the firmest of friends, both a trifle obstinate, but we generally agreed to differ, and in all matters concerning the natives I, of course, waived my crude opinions to his matured

judgment. I had the management of trekking and the cattle, after he, with his great knowledge of the people and their language, had obtained all the information he could about the waters and the distances between them. This worked well.'

It was somewhat of a disappointment to Oswell that Livingstone was disposed to regard the killing of game for a large camp as mere amusement, and easily undertaken by anyone; and scarcely gave gun and horses their due position as aids to his missionary labours:

'I am afraid he despised the *rôle* of a sportsman and no doubt believed, as he has stated, that the Kafirs looked upon us as weaklings to be used for providing them food. Perhaps he was right; but I think he overlooked that we, with no knowledge of the language, should have found it very difficult to make our way if we had only come to see the country, without shooting. He could talk to the Kafirs' ears and hearts, we only to their stomachs; but I would fain believe that his grand work was occasionally made a little smoother by the guns.'

But when left with the main responsibility on his own shoulders of feeding his followers, Livingstone's respect for hunting increased:

*Journal, May 7th,* 1852.—'Have been obliged to hunt three times this week. People are too weak to do it. After all it is hard work, and when I return tired, I remember the toil which our friend Oswell endured on our account last year. He never spared himself when we needed meat, and the weather was much warmer than it is now.'

The very freely expressed views of the Kafirs gave a further impetus to his appreciation of his companion's

pluck, skill and *usefulness* as a sportsman. He thus refers to the subject in his 'Missionary Travels':

'The natives universally declare Mr. Oswell is the greatest adept at elephant-hunting that ever came into the country. He hunted without dogs. It is remarkable that this lordly animal is so completely harassed by the presence of a few yelping curs as to be quite incapable of attending to man. He makes awkward attempts to crush them by falling on his knees, and sometimes places his forehead against a tree ten inches in diameter; glancing first on one side of the tree, then on the other, he pushes it down before him as if he thought thereby to catch his enemies. The only danger the huntsman has to apprehend is the dogs running towards him and thereby leading the elephant to their master. . . . We had reason to be proud of Mr. Oswell's success, for the inhabitants conceived from it a very high idea of English courage, and when they wished to flatter me, would say, "If you were not a missionary you would be just like Oswell; you would not hunt with dogs either."'

Latterly he seems not only to have entirely abandoned his original opinion, but to have forgotten that he ever held it:

*Rev. Horace Waller to Judge Hughes, Q.C.*

'Livingstone, who knew no fear himself, spoke of Oswell's desperate courage in hunting as quite wonderful. . . . He would, for instance, ride up alongside of a hyæna, and unloosing his stirrup leather while at full gallop, brain the beast with the heavy stirrup.'

And a few weeks before his death he writes to the Foreign Office:

'Oswell and Webb were fellow travellers and mighty hunters. Too much engrossed myself with Mission work

to hunt, except for the children's larder when going to visit distant tribes, I relished the sight of fair stand-up fights by my friends with the large denizens of the forest, and admired the true Nimrod class for their great courage, truthfulness and honour. Being a warm lover of natural history, the entire butcher tribe, bent only upon "making a bag" without regard to animal suffering, have not a single kindly word from me.'*

It is pleasant to read how one of these 'mighty hunters' speaks of the other:

'Your father,' writes Mr. Webb, 'was looked up to and respected by all both black and white, and was renowned as the most daring and successful hunter that ever went into the interior of Africa. He was as modest as he was brave.'

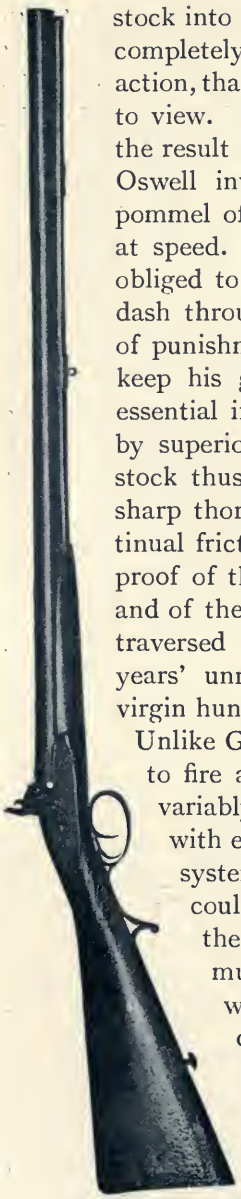
But no one was so well qualified to form a just appreciation of him throughout his African career as 'the best shot, sportsman, and writer that ever made Africa his field—my good friend Sir Samuel Baker.' Bringing to bear upon the subject a knowledge and authority that cannot be questioned, he gives free rein to a warm-hearted generosity and a manly enthusiasm as delightful as they are rare:

'Although,' he writes, 'Oswell was one of the earliest in the field of South African discovery, his name was not world-wide, owing to his extreme modesty, which induced

* This sentiment of humanity finds expression in his journal too:

'It is much against the grain in me to go sneaking up to lovely antelopes and point the murderous tube at their beautiful forms, but necessity has no law. I try to get a good shot and kill at once, and no animal escapes wounded, without giving me much pain.'

him to shun the notoriety that is generally coupled with the achievements of an explorer. Long before the great David Livingstone became famous, when he was the simple, unknown missionary doing his duty under the direction of his principal the late Rev. Robert Moffat, whose daughter he married, Oswell made his acquaintance, while in Africa, and became his early friend. . . . Oswell was not merely a shooter, but he had been attracted towards Africa by his natural love of exploration, and the investigation of untrodden ground. He was absolutely the first white man who had appeared upon the scene in many portions of South Africa which are now well known. . . . I have always regarded him as the perfection of a Nimrod. Six feet in height, sinewy and muscular, but nevertheless light in weight, he was not only powerful, but enduring. A handsome face with an eagle glance, but full of kindliness and fearlessness, bespoke the natural manliness of character which attracted him to the wild adventures of his early life. He was a first-rate horseman, and all his shooting was from the saddle, or by dismounting for the shot after he had run his game to bay. In 1861, when I was about to start on an expedition towards the Nile sources, Oswell, who had then retired from the field to the repose of his much-loved home, lent me his favourite gun with which he had killed almost every animal during his five years' hunting in South Africa. In exterior it looked like an ordinary double-barrelled rifle, weighing exactly ten pounds; in reality it was a smooth bore of great solidity . . . and carried a spherical ball of the calibre No. 10. . . . The grand old gun exhibited in an unmistakable degree the style of hunting which distinguished its determined owner. The hard walnut stock was completely eaten away for an inch of surface; the loss of wood suggested that rats had gnawed it, as there were minute traces of apparent teeth. This appearance might perhaps have been produced by an exceedingly coarse rasp. The fore-portion of the



OSWELL'S FAVOURITE GUN.

stock into which the ramrod was inserted was so completely worn through by the same destructive action, that the brass end of the rod was exposed to view. The whole of this wear and tear was the result of friction with the wait-a-bit thorns! Oswell invariably carried his gun across the pommel of his saddle when following an animal at speed. In this manner at a gallop he was obliged to face the low scrubby wait-a-bits, and dash through these unsparing thorns regardless of punishment and consequences, if he were to keep his game in view, which was absolutely essential if the animal were to be ridden down by superior pace and endurance. The walnut stock thus brought into hasty contact with the sharp thorns became a gauge, through the continual friction, which afforded a most interesting proof of the untiring perseverance of the owner and of the immense distances that he must have traversed at the highest speed during the five years' unremitting pursuit of game upon the virgin hunting-grounds of Southern Africa. . . .

Unlike Gordon Cumming, who was accustomed to fire at seventy or eighty yards, Oswell invariably strove to obtain the closest quarters with elephants and all other game. To this system he owed his great success, as he could make certain of a mortal point. At the same time the personal risk was much increased, as the margin for escape was extremely limited when attacking dangerous game at so short a distance as ten or fifteen paces. When Oswell hunted in South Africa the sound of a rifle had never disturbed the districts which are now occupied by settlers. . . . In those days

the multitudes of living creatures at certain seasons and localities surpassed the bounds of imagination; they stretched in countless masses from point to point of the horizon, and devoured the pasturage like a devastating flight of locusts. . . . There may be good numbers remaining in distant localities, but the scenes witnessed by Oswell in his youth can never be viewed again. . . . He was accepted at that time as the Nimrod of Southern Africa *par excellence*. His character, which combined extreme gentleness with utter recklessness of danger in the moment of emergency, added to complete unselfishness, insured him friends in every society; but it attracted the native mind to a degree of adoration. As the first comer among lands and savage people until then unknown, he conveyed an impression so favourable to the white man that he paved the way for a welcome to his successors. That is the first duty of an explorer, and in this he well earned the proud title of Pioneer of Civilization.'

## CHAPTER XII.

### PARIS, CONSTANTINOPLE, CRIMEA.

1853–1855. AGE 35–37.

Death of Edward Oswell—The Crimea—Oswell carries despatches and secret service money for Lord Raglan—An incident of the ride—Meets John—Present at the Battle of the Alma—In the trenches; composure under fire—Assists surgeons—Strange story of mesmeric *séance*—Resolves to visit America.

In October, 1853, Edward Waring Oswell died, and William Oswell sought change and distraction after the long nursing, in Paris, where he studied French with a M. de la Morinière. Five months passed; he knew Paris and its surroundings well, and was beginning to wonder in what direction to turn his steps next, when war was declared against Russia on March 28, 1854. In common with all his fellow-countrymen he was deeply stirred by the announcement, and followed every development with the closest interest. When, therefore, he received, a month later, a letter from his friend, Major Steele, then Lord Raglan's military secretary, urging him to join him at Constantinople, he hailed with characteristic eagerness the chance of seeing a new phase of life, and joyfully accepted the invitation. During the succeeding seven or eight weeks his recently-acquired knowledge of French stood him in good stead, and he became acquainted with many of the principal actors in the drama which was con-

MOSQUE IN CONSTANTINOPLE PREPARED FOR WAR.

From a contemporary photograph.

vulsing Europe. Of them all, the figure that stood out in boldest relief in his recollection was that of the English Ambassador, Sir Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. In June, whilst Silistria was besieged, it became necessary that despatches and secret-service money should be conveyed from Lord Raglan at Constantinople to Colonel Lintorn Simmons at Shumla. Oswell at once volunteered for the hazardous enterprise; an armed escort was granted him, and he set out on his journey at an hour's notice. As night drew on he sent the escort forward to look for lodging, and quarters for the horses. They soon returned to tell him they had discovered a deserted cottage, but on reaching it his quick eye detected everywhere signs of recent occupation. Questioning them closely, he extorted from them, after repeated denials, the sulky confession that they had turned a family out to make accommodation for themselves and him. Late as it was, hungry, thirsty and tired as they all were after a ride of seventy miles, he would not hear of a morsel being eaten, a drop drunk, or a moment's rest taken, until the poor folk were found. Joining in the search, he came upon them hiding in a wood, in abject terror of the soldiers. On his making them understand that his intentions were friendly, and inducing them to go back with him to the home whence they had been so rudely evicted, they could scarcely believe their good fortune, and when he ordered the soldiers to clear their cloaks and knapsacks and his own belongings out of the room, and begged permission to put them in the veranda and sleep there, the wife burst into tears and the man prostrated himself on the ground before him. They eagerly busied themselves in placing their little store of food on the table, and were only with the utmost difficulty persuaded to accept payment for it. This sort of conduct was as incomprehensible as it was displeasing to the escort, and next morning, after accompanying him unwillingly for an hour or two, they suddenly deserted,

taking with them his baggage. Utterly ignorant of the road to Shumla, knowing only three words of Turkish—tea, food, bed—he nevertheless, after many difficulties and dangers, and by requisitioning fresh horses and riding sixteen hours a day, arrived at his destination within the time he had originally laid down for himself, namely, seventy-two hours. The distance traversed was probably about two hundred and thirty miles.

JOHN STOOD BY MY STIRRUP.

Having discharged his undertaking he left for Constantinople, this time *viâ* Varna, carrying despatches for Lord Raglan. A great pleasure and surprise was in store for him:

'On my way to the coast I fell in with a cavalry regiment and the Rifle Brigade encamped near Devna. A sergeant of the latter saluted as I passed, and asked for news from the front. I turned myself half round to the right on my saddle to talk with him, and presently felt a hand placed very *gently*, *lovingly* on my left foot.

LORD RAGLAN'S QUARTERS AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

From a contemporary photograph.

John stood by my stirrup, his face a picture of affectionate triumph at having caught me again. He had taken service under an officer. We threw ourselves down under a bush and renewed old memories. The Major, near whose tent we were, called John, and finding from him who I was, most courteously entreated me, telling me how beloved he was by the regiment, and how well, through him, they knew my name.'

On September 7, 1854, he sailed with the allied fleet from Varna, and landing with the troops at Old Fort, was present at the battle of the Alma. By obeying an urgent summons to England he missed Balaclava and Inkermann, but returned for the winter with its terrible tale of mismanagement, misery, and privations heroically borne—*cheerfully*, he declared, by the blue-jackets and Zouaves. During part of the time he was the guest of Colonel Wenman Coke.

'I was introduced to Oswell,' writes that gentleman, 'before the Crimean War by his friend the late General Sir Thomas Steele. I was on Lord Rokeby's staff. The Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for War, and John Bidwell of the Foreign Office, were stopping with Rokeby. After lunch one day the old Lord, who was a desperate fire-eater, asked his guests to accompany him to the advanced Trenches. We all went down to the Quarries. As a rule the fire was very light in the afternoon. On this occasion the Russians opened with grape. The Grenadiers were manning the Quarries. I nearly died with laughter when I heard Bidwell soliloquizing as he stooped down and the grape-shot tore over us: "John Bidwell, I always thought you a fool, and now I am sure of it." A man of the Grenadiers, who formed the covering party, had his leg shot off by a large grape-shot. Oswell, who was the coolest and least concerned of the party, picked up the delinquent grape-shot, and put it in his

pocket. What struck me was the composure of Oswell when under fire.'

He witnessed the storming of the Malakoff on September 8, 1855, and the fall of Sebastopol on the following day, and it was not until six weeks later that he took his passage back to England.

Throughout his sojourn at the Crimea he assisted the overworked surgeons night and day on the field and in the

THE COMPOSURE OF OSWELL WHEN UNDER FIRE.

hospitals, and devoted much of his time to visiting and cheering the sick and wounded. When anæsthetics and medical appliances ran short, the knife was, of course, none the less busy, and he used often to say he had no idea what pluck was until he saw men undergo, in cold blood, with all their wits about them, unflinchingly and unmurmuringly, the most agonizing operations. They would hold between their teeth a bullet, a piece of wood, a handkerchief, a quid of tobacco, and it was a point of honour with them *not to let it drop* until the doctors had finished with them.

THE CAMP AT SCUTARI, WITH THE BARRACKS IN THE DISTANCE.

From a contemporary photograph.

Since his return from Africa he had seen as much as possible of his relations; and of his many friends most, perhaps, of Mr. Ashton and his daughter, at whose house, invited or uninvited, he was always sure of the heartiest, warmest welcome. During one of his visits a curious incident occurred which he was fond of relating. Miss Ashton, who took considerable interest in mesmerism, persuaded him, though he was a confirmed sceptic, to go with her to a *séance* given by two Frenchmen. When one of them had mesmerized the other he carefully blindfolded him, and then, handing him books or papers, topsy-turvy, requested him to read any passage chosen by members of the audience. He did, or appeared to do this with perfect ease, but, somewhat to Miss Ashton's annoyance, Oswell persisted in suggesting mirrors and ventriloquism as affording possible explanations. The audience were then requested to hand up any personal articles they might have about them, for comment.

The surprised assurance of several acquaintances of Miss Ashton of the absolute accuracy of the comments in their instance, induced him to try his fortune. It happened that he had in his pocket-book a bristle from the tail of the first elephant he ever shot. This was passed up to the platform, and the instant it reached the mesmerized man's hands he began to describe in minute detail, to the audience, *an* elephant hunt, to Oswell, every incident of *the* particular hunt, even to the seven shots fired, and to the hunter springing upon the great beast as it fell dead, and, with a shout of triumph, throwing his hat into the air. His attention and interest were strongly excited, and he hastened to put the performer's powers to a further test by sending up a letter. As he touched it he threw himself back in his chair, thrust his hand several times through his hair, and then, putting his left foot on his right knee, busied himself in picking at the bottom of the leg of his trousers. The attitude and tricks were those of the writer, Mr. Brooke Cunliffe; he rode with straps,

and it was a habit with him when talking to pull off the frayed edges.

After six or seven weeks at home, Oswell resolved to set off again on his travels. He had decided on going through North and South America and the West Indies. As he bade good-bye to the Ashtons they laughingly wondered how, when he married, his wife would like his restless, wandering habits, and desire for constant change of scene. 'If I ever love a woman well enough to marry her,' said he, 'I shall ask for nothing better than to settle quietly down with her once and for all in some out of the way place, and shall be well content to go nowhere and see nobody else for the rest of my life.'

## CHAPTER XIII.

### NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA AND WEST INDIES.

1855–1856. AGE 37–38.

A lady passenger on board the *Tyne*, and a very gentlemanly man—A cup of kindness—Monsignore Talbot—The north coast of South America—From Colon to Panama with Colonel Totten—Wonders of the journey—Steams down the west coast to Valparaiso—Description of ports touched at—Influence of the physical geography of a country on its inhabitants—Two thousand miles of coast without a harbour—'One of your sincerest friends; try me if need be'—Mr. and Mrs. Lees—A most happy month at Nassau—Niagara—Miss Bremer's books—Interesting appreciation of America and Americans—Return to England.

On November 17th, 1855, Francis Rivaz went down with his daughter Agnes to St. Katharine's Docks, to see her safely on board the *Tyne*. She had been ordered to spend two winters abroad and had accepted the invitation of her brother-in-law Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Lees, Chief Justice of the Bahamas, to come out to him and his wife, her sister Ellen. Mr. Rivaz watched the passengers hurrying up the gangway and took strong and audible exception to the appearance of most of them, regarded as companions and possible acquaintances of his daughter. Suddenly a tall, active figure and a bronzed, bearded face caught his eye. 'Agnes,' he exclaimed, 'for your comfort I may tell you that a very gentlemanly man has just come

on board.' She smiled at the idea of a gentlemanly man being a comfort to her, but it was her future husband, William Cotton Oswell.

The *Tyne* met with very heavy weather down Channel and in the Bay, and he spent much of his time in helping and amusing the ladies, who, less fortunate than he, were too ill to move about, and passed their days lying on the deck. On one occasion a shower had driven everyone below when his attention was attracted to a poor servant, who, leaving her cabin for the first time since the beginning of the voyage, was creeping, dazed and tremulous, forlornly along the gangway. He immediately ordered a bottle of champagne, and hastening to her and bowing low, begged her to do him the honour of taking a glass with him.

MISS AGNES RIVAZ IN 1855.

Of his fellow-passengers he saw most of Monsignore Talbot. They delighted in one another's society, and as they paced the deck in deep converse by the hour together, afforded a curious and fascinating contrast—the astute, portly ecclesiastic with his measured utterance and polished impassiveness, and the frank, lithe, vigorous traveller with his emphatic speech and eager gesticulation.

On arriving at St. Thomas he continued his journey to Colon, and Miss Rivaz went on in another ship to the Bahamas.

*W. Cotton Oswell to Benjamin Cotton.*

'PANAMA,
'*Dec.* 13, 1855.

'We had rather a crowd on board the *Tyne*, but one found one's way amongst it in a day or two, and I had a very pleasant passage. We reached St. Thomas, a pretty little hilly island, on the 15th day from Southampton, and next morning left again in the steamer *Dee*, with twenty passengers, for the Spanish Main and Colon. Until we neared Santa Marta the voyage was monotonous enough, but here we got a capital view of the Sierra Nevada. A massy bank of clouds closed the interval between the lower and higher ranges so that they seemed to rise unbroken and abrupt 18,000 feet from the sea, the blue, snow-streaked summits standing out sharp and clearly defined in the bright air. On the afternoon of this day we anchored for a few hours in the pretty little bay of Santa Marta, and I went on shore on a voyage of discovery, but found nothing worth looking at. We paddled on to Cartagena, a Moorish-looking old town, now, like all Spanish South American Republican places, falling into ruin, but bearing in its ramparts and crumbling, unarmed batteries, evidence of its former strength. It is approached through a lagoon formed by two or three low-lying, thickly-wooded islands; scenery and heat thoroughly tropical. We reached Colon next night in a torrent of rain. The coast from Cape Manzanilla was shrouded in the blackest heaviest mass of clouds, and the sea and land were deluged with the downpour. Panama, though finely situated on a promontory jutting out into the Pacific, is, like its brethren, dirty and miserable. The old town lies about seven miles off; only the ruins of some of the principal buildings remain. It was destroyed by the Buccaneers. I am surprised to find it so cool, situated as it is, the thermometer seldom rising above 80° or 82°. Would that I could describe

the wonders of our journey hither from Colon! But I am no letter-writer, as you know.

'Of all I have ever seen these forty-eight miles are the most wondrous in their way. Colon itself, built as it is upon an island won by pile-driving from the sea, is an extraordinary place, pretty and wild-looking. For eight miles the rail runs from it over an unbroken swamp, and every foot is on piles; for twenty miles more, at places, piles and timber substratum are largely used, and it is only in the last twenty that it assumes the character of any other line. Imagine a screeching American steam-engine worming its way through the most magnificent forest you can conceive, fit abode for iguanodons and megalosauri; giant trees covered with orchideous plants and bound with creepers and parasites of every description; the most glorious flowers, the pets of your English hothouses, in the wildest luxuriance, and undergrowth so rank and tangled that nought save an antediluvian monster could force his way through it. Had I seen, or were I to see nothing else than this, I should feel fully repaid for coming from England.

'The rail has but few cuttings and those of no great extent; the greatest rise is at a point called the Culebra, and for three or four miles on either side of this, the inclination is about sixty feet in a mile. The engineer who planned and executed it came over in the same train with me, and was very polite in explaining, and answering questions; his name is Col. Totten. I stood behind most part of the time with the breaksman, and am free to allow there were places I was very glad to be over, the earth crumbling away from the banks, and the rail sinking rather more than was pleasant to look at; but it is growing more solid daily. It cost $7,000,000 and 6,000 to 7,000 lives. We were three hours and a half doing the distance, but a good hour of this was lost at the different *wooding* stations, and waiting for other trains in sidings, for there is but one line of rails.'

*To Benjamin Cotton.*

'VALPARAISO,
'*Janry.* 9, 1856.

'We left Panama on the 14th. The view of the bay from the anchorage is pretty, particularly the broken ground to the N.E. A small cluster of islands forms a kind of breakwater to the south and west, through which, as the ship leaves, you get very picturesque glimpses of the town. We touched at Taboga, an island nine miles off, on which until very lately the Americans had a factory for repairing their steamships, and in which we still have coaling stations, and then put the ship's head straight for Guayaquil, which we reached on the 18th. The town lies about sixty miles from the coast up a gulf and river of the same name. It is neither inviting in site, approach, nor in itself.

'The country was burnt up and barren looking, and the river, although broad, has low, swampy banks, and the place, though said to contain 40,000 souls, is miserable and dilapidated. Running along a coast not remarkable for anything save its great sterility, we stopped at Payta, Lambayeque, Pacasmayo and Casma — all wretched holes. At Lambayeque in consequence of a high surf, boats are unable to effect a landing, and their place is supplied by *balsas*, large rafts with a sail, formed of trees tied together, with a raised platform for the luggage and passengers. They are exactly the same as the old Peruvian vessels of the time of Pizarro.

'Lambayeque is rich in rice and sugar-cane, but the only object of any interest to me was a small hill containing large quantities of magnetic ore, and the *ouacas*, or burial places of the Incas. By Casma you get the first view of the Andes spurs from the higher chain coming down to the sea, and ending in bold broken islands.

'The coast has disappointed me on the whole; some

particular spots are grandly desolate, but it has few other charms. You may judge *how* desolate it is when I tell you that though from Payta to Valparaiso we were never out of sight of land, and generally quite close in, except at the small towns at which we stopped, I never saw man or animal for 1,800 miles. We reached Lima on Christmas Eve, a great night with the Spaniards. I wandered about through churches, *plaza* and streets till nearly 2 a.m., for the whole world was out of doors. I had heard so much of the beauty of the Limanian ladies, that I expected to see much more of it than I did. The *sayamanto* and *mantilla*, now almost laid aside for French frippery, must have helped a good deal I think. The city, planned, and mostly built, by Pizarro, is prettily and well situated on the bank of the Rimac, six miles from Callao, with which it is connected by a rail. The climate is delicious, and though no rain falls, it is generally cloudy, and everything is kept green and fresh by a heavy nightly mist. The worst thing about it is the inefficiency of the Government to suppress robbery. Inside the walls all is pretty well, but you cannot ride a mile outside, in any direction, without a very good chance of being attacked. Everyone goes armed. The Bay of Callao is open, and if the wind did not nearly always blow from the south, would be little better than an open roadstead.

'The islands of San Lorenzo and Fraulon, which form a shelter in this direction, give you an idea of what an earthquake can do. They have originally been one, but are now completely separated, and in the Channel which parts them, vast disjointed masses of rock lie tumbled one upon the other. We touched at Pisco, Yslay, Arica, Iquique, Cobija, Caldera, Guasco, Coquimbo, but really there is nothing to be said of all these, save that they are barren and miserable looking beyond belief. Arica and Caldera have railways, the one to Tacna, the other to the mines of Copiapo. The *tons* of silver and heaps of silver and copper ore I saw at Caldera from these mines, gave

me a very grand idea of the enormous mineral wealth of the interior. A few miles south of Arica the cliffs rise abruptly from the sea, and are very beautifully tinted with the oxides of the metals they contain, iron and copper. From the upper and lower parts being of softer formation than the middle, the little rain that occasionally falls has worked the face of the cliff wall into devices resembling stars and hour-glasses, the edges of which coloured by the iron and copper have a very remarkable appearance.

'The passengers all along the coast are the greatest tagrag. Down to Lima I had an Israelite for a cabin companion, and a very good little fellow he was, with a pair of the most irresolute little legs in the world; he had the top berth and could never make up his mind to spring to the deck. I used to long to catch hold of his legs and pull him out. When he left me I had a succession of Spaniards billeted on me, who embarking at one port and disembarking at the next, had nothing for it but to fill up the interim with howling and being sick. There was no such thing as a single cabin, and luckily I did not care so much about it, as I am a great hand at sleeping under difficulties. When we arrived here we had upwards of three hundred passengers on board!

'Valparaiso is a decent looking place, curiously dotted along the crests of the ravines of a hillside. There are upwards of one hundred vessels in the bay, and a good deal of bustle in the streets and it has a thriving appearance. As I have letters of introduction, etc., I shall stay about a month, visit Santiago, Concepcion, the mines of Copiapo, and then fall back upon Lima for a season. The dust storms have been very bad the last few days, and these, with the climate, reminded me of the Cape, but this is much cooler; the temperate climate all along the coast has surprised me very much. At Lima it was perfection, and even at Guayaquil, close under the line, by no means oppressive, whereas here the nights are quite cold.'

*To his Future Wife.*

'VALPARAISO,
'*Jan.* 8, 1856.

'. . . Mrs. A. (a fellow voyager) remained behind at Panama. . . . I was content, for though of course broken-hearted, *j'étais libre*, and since the time of Jacob a good deal has depended upon the parties one serves for, and one did get rather tired of that dear little woman; though it was a funny idea too, for a time, that the world and its contents had all been created for a small middle-aged lady with short-waisted dresses and a celestial nose. However, one of my old masters at Rugby used to declare that the windows of churches were made small on the outside and large on the in, to teach us to look little upon the faults of others, and much into ourselves, and I'm afraid I'm flattening my nose against the glass notwithstanding the instruction I received in my youth; besides, she liked me well enough when there was nobody else by, and one must not expect more than one gives. . . .

'Who could have been the ancient inhabitants of this country? Nothing will make me believe the Peruvians under their Inca rulers could have made that road of giants from Quito to Chilé. Besides, it is admitted that they pointed out at Cuzco buildings from which they had copied their designs, but of the architects of which they confessedly knew nothing. . . . I have never been so much impressed as along this coast with the influence the physical geography of a country must exercise over the character and progress of its inhabitants. A line of 2,000 miles without a harbour (Callao and Coquimbo are but open bays) a mountain-bound shore, no rivers and a heavy surf, offer nearly insuperable barriers to improvement from without, at all events. . . . The stars sparkle here in the bright dry air just as they did at the dear old Cape. The Southern Cross and Magellan clouds stand

clear above the housetops, and the little crescent of the new moon with its gauze-like skirt of *earthshine* comes out rounded and in relief as part of a globe. From my window I can see Orion right overhead, but Aldeboran, disgusted at the notice taken of the Southern Cross, has managed to hide himself. You must think I'm getting romantic in my old age, but the stars have been very very often dear friends to me. Don't forget that you are to read Brewster's "More Worlds than One" carefully and thoughtfully.

'Do you think we ever really forget anything? We poke things away into holes and corners, but doesn't a stray thought every now and then light up the darkest nook?

'*January* 14. I have kept this open until to-day and now it must go, though I am very unwilling to say good-bye to an *old* friend.

'We live in deeds, not years, in thoughts, not breath,
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart throbs.'

'Do you remember the next three lines?

'He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best;
And he whose heart beats quickest lives the longest,
Lives in one hour more than in years do some.'

'God be with you and strengthen spirit and body. As long as I'm anything believe me one of your sincerest friends—try me if need be.'

On leaving Valparaiso he re-crossed the Isthmus and made his way to Cuba. Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Lees, with Miss Rivaz, were travelling in Turks Islands and San Domingo. But hearing before starting that there was a prospect of his visiting Nassau, they left a letter putting their house at his disposal. He arrived early in June, and joining them on their return spent a month

with them enjoying their kindness and generous hospitality to the utmost. There was something peculiarly attractive to him in the bright, sweet, contented nature of his hostess, 'a woman who consumes her own smoke,' as an acquaintance aptly described her; while he regarded his host as possessing 'the finest brain and the greatest power of lucid explanation of anyone I ever met'; and for these and other reasons not far to seek, this Nassau sojourn was always one of the happiest recollections of his life.

In July he left for North America, and from Niagara wrote his future wife his impression of the Falls, and an intelligent, acute, yet kindly criticism of the Americans.

'*July* 28, 1856.

'How I wish you were here, sitting in the veranda with the spray from this glorious waterfall sprinkling you as it is me. For once in my life I feel the want of someone to talk to, and help me wonder. . . . I am right in front of the Horseshoe with the Canada Fall on my left and the water is roaring and foaming close by me. Don't be afraid, I'm not going to give you a description of the indescribable. . . . As I fancy most others, how disappointed I was at the first view of these Falls as we crossed the magnificent railway suspension bridge, and how I thought they had been exaggerated! but now I know no words or pencil could ever convey anything of their power and grandeur. I send you a small daguerreotype of them; it is better than the ordinary run, but has the faults which certainly the original has not—smallness and prettiness. I am not half satisfied, though I have been everywhere and seen everything connected with them, to the centre of the Horseshoe in the little steamer *Maid of the Mist*, right up among the thick foam, froth and spray, under the arch formed by the falling water, and to every point on either side from which a good view is to be obtained. I must be off to-morrow, or I shall miss the steamer from Boston. I slept last night

at Buffalo, and had a look at and steamed into Erie, and have only just returned to this down the Niagara river, near the Falls and rapids. I do not find much to interest me; the country is very like ours at home, but younger and fresher, with none of that artificial neatness and economy of space about the farms and houses; and all the parks are Nature-planted. . . . You must all have spoilt me at Nassau, for I have never felt so much alone since I left. . . . I see Mrs. Lees's bright, happy face twenty times a day. . . . I cannot tell you how much I feel all her and Mr. Lees's kindness. I have been reading "Brothers and Sisters" by our mutual friend Miss Bremer. This woman's writings have a great charm for me, chiefly, I imagine, from their describing a life I never knew anything of, save as quite a boy, and which therefore keeps its colouring of romance still. I generally utterly despise her men and women. What can be weaker than the characters in this story—Hedwig and old Sir Erqueles excepted? Dear Hedwig is very winning in her gentleness, is she not? But Uno and that elder brother were never meant for men; and then that dreadful Icelandic woman of the single speech!

'I have not seen a good-looking face or figure since I came here. Now American women are generally pretty. . . . Hooking by steam, aerated petticoats and consequent short waists seem a prevailing epidemic. . . . You see worse expressions and better-shaped heads among the Americans than among any other people—never by any chance a noble face, or a very weak one. The men are apparently very good sons to their mothers, and the women good wives—virtues large enough to cover a multitude of sins. . . . From this—Boston—I embark to-morrow at mid-day and I have had a delightful journey from Albany here through very pretty country. Boston and the Bostonians look more like our own country; the ladies not nearly so showy as the New Yorkers, but much nicer and quieter. I sometimes find myself making comparisons between them and my

own countrywomen, but the result is much in favour of the latter. They will be a great nation these Americans. You know I believe in progressive development of intellect, etc., in nations as firmly as I do in progressive creations. Your friend Tennyson says somewhere :

> 'Well, were it not a pleasant thing to fall asleep with all one's friends,
>
> * * * * *
>
> And every hundred years to rise and learn the world and sleep again.'

'My first question after my hundred years' sleep would be about the Americans. Their faults are chiefly those of a young nation, uncertain of its own position and very sensitive of the opinion of the world. They will grow out of this. The present lot are but the working bees. There will be gentlemen-drones and queen-bees by-and-by. It is only when they pretend to be gentlemen *already* that I dislike them. Everyone honours the hard, earnest worker, but we are much more frequently made contemptible by affecting qualities we have not, than by those we possess. Their energy is wonderful, and their recklessness is as much with regard to themselves as others.'

In September, 1856, he started homewards, and thenceforward his travels were at an end.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ENGLAND.

1856–1860. AGE 38–42.

Mrs. Beecher-Stowe—Miss Rivaz's family—A loan without security — Cheerful acceptance of disappointments — Livingstone's return—Success of his book—Livingstone writes from the Shiré River a year's doings—Colonel Steele—'My cousin Kate'—Bishop Wilberforce's climax and anti-climax marvels — Lord Spencer—'My South African spoils'—Another letter from Livingstone; 'it's your own idea that I am bent on carrying out'—Between two stools—Cousin Kate's legacy—Date of wedding fixed —Benjamin Cotton's congratulations—John as a butler—Letter from Francis Rivaz.

FOR the next three years and a half Oswell made the Burlington Hotel, Cork Street, his headquarters. Extremely popular and eagerly sought after, he went much into society, and when in town rarely dined at home.

*To his Future Wife.*

'BURLINGTON HOTEL,
'*Sept.* 15, 1856.

'Mrs. Stowe, the 'Uncle Tom' woman, was one of our passengers, with her two funny kittenheaded daughters, son and husband (a satellite of the third order). Mrs. Stowe is clever and clearheaded on her own particular subject, and rather pleasant in manner, but she has, as

most people with one idea, a great notion of pumping you, to water her own particular flower. I send you her last work, "Dred." I can't read it through, but there are pretty conceits in it in the first hundred pages.

'If you have not seen "The Angel in the House" and "The Espousals" I am sure they will be great favourites. "Hertha" I don't take to, but it is Miss Bremer's. She is better in happy homes than in theology and the rights of women. . . . I took your little parcels down to Cowley Street the morning after I got to London, intending to leave them at the door and drive on to the Exchange, but as no one was at home I took them on with me. On the awful red man's calling out "Francis Rivaz," I saw the face I had seen on board the *Tyne* coming towards my end of the room, and whether by intuition or from the persuasion there could be but one such dried-up looking creature in the world, your father shook me by the hand and called me by my name before I could mention it, and made a very pretty little speech which I tried to answer, but broke down. . . . I couldn't dine with him for three or four days, though he was kind enough to ask me immediately, but went down to H. on the Monday after my arrival, and had the unexpected pleasure of meeting two of your sisters—Juliet and Theophila, and being introduced to your aunts and that dear old lady Mrs. Rivaz.'

He soon became very intimate with all Miss Rivaz's family. Writing her his impressions of some of the members, he says:

'Mrs. Lewin I like very much. She quite startled me at first by bright charmingly expressed little thoughts every now and then glancing about like fireflies amidst her usually quiet manner.

'Your brother John I take to; he is so frank and simple-minded, and sincere in manner, with a lot of good, solid knowledge.

'Louisa, as Mrs. Stowe says of Nina, is a bright brook with an atmosphere favourable to rainbows.

'The more I know of Offey the more I like her.'

The more he knew of all of them, the more he liked them, and the more they loved him. Without losing touch of his own family, he adopted and identified himself with that of his future wife to such an extent that her people became his people in deed and in truth—became and remained—through good report and evil report, in joy and sorrow, in sickness and health, till death them did part.

During his wanderings he had left his money in the hands of Benjamin Cotton, who remitted him the dividends as they accrued; and whenever these proved insufficient for his modest personal wants, and to allow of his giving a free rein to his most generous impulses, he had not hesitated to direct the raising of what more was required by sale of capital. With a constitutional repugnance for business, he had never taken the trouble to ascertain what he actually possessed. Now, however, there existed a strong inducement for doing so, and he found to his dismay that his income did not reach the limit Mr. Rivaz fixed as essential to his consent to the marriage with his daughter. To her alone, enjoining on her absolute secrecy, he confided by what curious irony of fate their happiness was destined for a time to be marred:

'Brighton,
'*Nov.* 16, 1856.

'Four years ago, one I had known for twenty years wished to marry, but had no money. I happened to find this out, and offered to lend him what was a large sum to me—£6,000. He had no security to offer but his word, and an expectation that his father would leave him a small estate of about the value of the sum advanced. He was

disappointed, for his name was not even mentioned, I believe, in the will. . . . He means all that is right, no doubt, but this sum has gone, I'm afraid, to form part of the capital of the moon's bank.'

To supplement his income he immediately set about trying to find some suitable remunerative employment, and until his marriage never relaxed his efforts; but they proved unsuccessful. How he accepted the repeated disappointments the following extracts from letters to Miss Rivaz, written respectively at the beginning and near the end of the period of waiting, sufficiently show:

'I am very sorry to have lost the appointment, but have no feeling of doubt that my having done so is for the best somehow or other, though I don't see it. . . . I knew the worst some days ago, but hesitated to tell you till I had it in writing. I dare say you think I ought to have told you from the first, but uncertainties that we can't forward or retard are not worth talking about.'

'Cheer up and don't be down-hearted. All's for the best. Out of darkness comes light, and, as we agreed yesterday the *only* true happiness is in trying to do good to others, let us both try our utmost *separately*, so long as it is God's will, that should He see fit to unite us, we may be able to work with more power, *together*.'

On December 9, 1856, Livingstone arrived in London, and on the 15th the Royal Geographical Society held a special meeting to welcome him. The attendance included the three friends—Steele, Vardon and Oswell.

His 'Missionary Travels' was published in October, 1857, and he despatched the first presentation copy 'with the kindest regards of his fellow-traveller and much attached friend,' to Oswell, who, after reading it, wrote to him:

'. . . Let me congratulate you, my dear fellow, and I do so most sincerely, as you know, on its wonderful success. Everyone is talking of it and you. I know you don't care much for what others think, but we are all just slightly human, and the good words and the good wishes of this world are not altogether to be despised. There is only one thing I wish you had left out, and I almost wish you had as clean forgotten it as I had.

'Love to your wife and little ones,

'Always yours affectionately.'

*To his Future Wife.*

'Burlington Hotel,
'Cork Street,
'*Oct.* 14, 1858.

'The marriage* went off very well. . . . Poor old Daddy† was fairly knocked over at last, though only for a second. God bless him! he's the dearest old man in the whole world. He writes so tenderly and affectionately, it is hard to read his letter. Dear old rough, warm-hearted bear. You're the best beast I know!'

During Livingstone's stay in England the meetings between him and Oswell were, of course, frequent, and before returning to Africa he promised to keep his friend *au courant* with every detail of his further journeys and explorations, proposed and accomplished. He recognised that while to the public the result was everything, or nearly everything, one who had been his fellow-traveller and was intimately acquainted with his methods and aims would appreciate, as no other man could, each step that conduced to the result. It was therefore a great disappointment to Oswell when month after month passed

* That of Miss Alice Ashton with Edward Lyon, Esq.
† Mr. Ashton.

and the promise remained unfulfilled. At last a letter arrived, the contents of which are ancient history now, but they illustrate the pleasant, easy confidence subsisting between the friends :

'CHIBISA'S VIL., RIVER SHIRÉ,
'LAT. 16° 2′ S., LONG. 35° E.,
'*April* 2, 1859.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,

'A year has nearly elapsed since we parted, but I have been unable to write you a line. My naval officer thought we could move neither hand nor foot without him and resigned, first when we entered the Zambesi, and subsequently, when he thought I could not get rid of him. I was as mild as possible until I saw that he meant to ride roughshod over all authority, but I then assumed the charge of the steamer, and when I made the first trip more successfully than he had ever done, I never saw human face lengthen as did Bedingfield's. When I gave him notice to quit, he began to dance and sing, but when he saw we got on better without, than with, him, he tried to induce the other members to remonstrate with me. They gave me written declarations, instead, that I had acted quite right, so off he was obliged to go. Not however before doing us an immensity of harm. He overloaded the expedition with baggage; the Government gave me a fine steamer, the *Bann*, and as it drew but 3 feet it would have suited admirably. Well, he applied to me for a sailing master, and having refused on the ground of wishing to have but few Europeans, he re-examined the *Bann*, and though at first he said she was all we needed, she was now unfit for anything. I, of course, yielded to the opinion of my "naval officer," and she was rejected. When we got on board ship, we saw that B. could not have navigated her out, from seasickness! I never quarrelled with him, but he quarrelled with the Captain of the *Pearl* and others, and it is a

relief to have done with him, though from my having turned Skipper myself I have not been able to write to my friends. Then the vessel we have, the *Ma Robert*, is such an awful botch of a job I have been obliged to take up our luggage and provisions in driblets, having passed over 1,700 miles at least, and we have to cut a ton of wood for 7 or 8 hours' steam. A current of $3\frac{1}{4}$ knots (patent log) holds her back so that she cannot gain an inch, and so does a stiff breeze. I have applied to Government again for the *Bann*, and if she is not granted, then I have ordered £2,000 to be expended for a vessel of my own. We could have passed up the rapid of Kebrabasa in February last had the vessel possessed any power, but she has none, for the current then flowing, and being only $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch thick, we were afraid she would double up had we attempted to tow her through by means of the Makololo. . . . As we are below the rapid, and our establishment is at Tette, we are examining the country adjacent. The Shiré promised best, so we went up a hundred miles of latitude from its source in January last, and found it a fine river for a steamer. It really does come out of the Lake Nyanja, but a little above this, as navigation is obstructed by cataracts of the same rock, and nearly in the same latitude, as Kebrabasa. The people, Manganja, were much alarmed at our presence, so we thought it unsafe to leave the vessel and go overland, but returning to Tette we remained there during the most unhealthy month, and have now come back to see what can be done. In the interval of palaver about guides, etc., I write this to you. There is a high mountain near its entrance, called Morambala. It is 4,000 feet high, and a fine point for a health station. It is well cultivated on the top, having hills and dales and flowing fountains there. Lemon and orange trees grow wild, so do pineapples. Above Morambala the country or valley of the Shiré is marshy, and the river winds, but not so much as the Chobé. Above this marsh there is a large

plain, and prodigious numbers of elephants were seen both times on it. There are branches forming islands, and when we got the elephants on these, we hunted them in this steamer. With a good one we could have killed the whole herd. I saw five or six herds of them at once. My companions estimated them at 3,000 (*I* think 800 or less). But one herd had fine tusks; probably all the males had. The bodies are not large. There is plenty of game in the country, but there is no hunting it; the grass is so tall one is lost and cannot get well along except on paths. I keep a corner to tell you how we get on. We hope to start on the 4th.

'*Shupanga, May* 14, 1859.—We left on the 4th, and after a fortnight through a well-peopled, mountainous country, came in sight of a high mountain, called Dzomba or *Z*omba, in the East. We were now 1,500 feet higher than the vessel, and the Shiré seemed coming round the North end of *Z*omba, but a marsh prevented our going that way. After we tried it we went South a little, and crossed the spur of the mountain, and first got a sight of Lake Shirwa on the 14th of April. On the 18th we were on its shores, and a magnificent sight it is, for it is surrounded with lofty mountains. Ngami is a mere pond compared to it. We went up the side of a hill, but could see no horizon but water in the N.N.E. and 26° of that. Only, two mountain-tops rose in the blue distance like little islands, 50 or 60 miles away. It is 20 or 30 miles broad, of a pear-shape, but the tail extends some 30 miles south of the body of the tadpole. As you know me to have been always a dead hand at drawing, look here and admire!' (Here follows a rough map with 'John Arrowsmith' written in the corner.) 'There is no outlet known. The water is bitter, a little like a very weak solution of Epsom salts. We think it 60 miles long, exclusive of the tail, and the people told us that it is separated from the Lake Nyinyesi by a narrow neck of land. We slept at the village marked

o, and they compared the distance across from Shiré to Nyinyesi to what we came that morning from the village—5 or 6 miles. Zomba, or as it was sometimes pronounced Dzomba, being over 6,000 feet, to a person in Nyassa or Nyanja, it will appear *in* the lake, as one of the Church Missionaries described it. We patronize Nyinyesi—the stars—as Nyanja, by which they sometimes call it, means any large water. Well, we went down the Shirwa Valley, and in crossing over the range which separates it from the Shiré Valley we got a glimpse of the end of the tail. Went down the Shiré till we came to a branch called Ruo, which rises in that high range called Milanje, ascended it 7 or 8 miles, and found we were about 30 miles of Lat. from Shirwa. If we don't get another vessel soon, we go up the Ruo, carry a whaler over to Shirwa, then go to Nyinyesi. (*This is for yourself only.*) We could not hear a word of Burton, and have had no news from home if he has discovered Nyassa first, thanks to my naval donkey. I would have done all this last year, but we have got a Lake of our own, and a short cut to his. Dr. Kirk and 15 Makololo formed our party. Country high and cold, no game; but on the west of the Shiré, the Maravi country, there is plenty. We did not come among Maravi. All we met were Manganja, and one party of slave-trading Bajaua. The Portuguese knew nothing of Shirwa. It is 15° 23′ S. Lat., 35° 35′ E. Long. On coming down Shiré we killed two elephants and wounded several, caught a young one, but one of the Makololo in excitement cut his proboscis, so that he bled too much for our medical skill. He died after two days. The Portuguese are bent on shutting up what we open. They never went up the Shiré, and dare not now. An old Lady at Tette distinctly remembers two black men coming to Tette, and they never went farther. Consequently, the claim set up for them fails for 300 miles.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Future Wife.*

'Burlington Hotel,
'*July* 25, 1859.

'I have just returned, rather later than I expected, and have scant time to do all I want, and get off by the 4 p.m. High Wycombe train. I have spent a very pleasant two days with Steele; his house is most charmingly situated in the highest and best wooded part of Northamptonshire and is very comfortable and well arranged in itself. We went twice to church, and were evidently the wonder of the quiet little country village, which, of course, gratified us exceedingly! Steele was glad to see me, and proud—and rightly—of his pretty domain. We got on capitally, he is so thoroughly manly and honest, and besides we like one another. It seems rather strange he should *me*, but if he didn't he wouldn't want to see me; we are neither very demonstrative, but understand each other.'

Benjamin Cotton was living at High Wycombe at this time, and his nephew was able to make a very practical return to him for his unvarying kindness and fatherly affection. Suffering from agonizing pain in the eyeball, the old gentleman was treated with large doses of calomel, which had the effect of temporarily destroying his mental balance. He was accordingly placed under the charge of a medical man. It was not thought desirable that any of his relations should live with him, but Oswell ran down constantly to spend a few days, and devoting himself entirely to him, succeeded in interesting, amusing and soothing him as no one else could. Everything yielded and was postponed to this duty, and the doctor, recognising that during these visits his attendance might safely be dispensed with, gratefully availed himself of the opportunities for rest and change thus afforded. Such references as the following are of frequent occurrence in the letters of this date to Miss Rivaz:

'My dear old uncle is so fidgety I can hardly write. I was in hopes of coming up early enough this evening to call on you, but I must stay until his doctor returns, and he will not now I fear be home before night.'

*To his Future Wife.*

'Burlington Hotel,
'*July*, 1859.

'I hope R. will call and take you over to see my cousin Kate. She's a very good, kind, affectionate-hearted friend, and I trust you may like her. As I have told you, she was my Father's most generous helper; and with her warm-hearted, simple affection a comfort to my Mother in her hour of trouble; and for their sakes she has always been kindness itself to their son. She was my brother Edward's godmother, and very fond of him. Though I know many people in the world pretentious upon $\frac{1}{20}$th of her worth, I don't know anyone so humble and truthfully simple. Mrs. Egerton Hubbard is, I hear, very desirous of seeing me. Her husband, with whom I was at school, has frequently asked me before, but now she has been good enough to send me a message. I was a schoolfellow of her brother William Baldock.'

*To his Future Wife.*

'*Aug.* 13, 1859.

'I firmly believe *you* could have *written* a sermon much more to the point than one I heard yesterday from Wilberforce, but it was extempore, and though very rambling, I hardly think it would be possible for oratorical ability to exceed the effect of S. S.'s climax and anticlimax marvels. Though he could never lead me a yard, I fairly wondered at his extraordinary power over words. He wreathed them together in most graceful chains, played with them as he listed, and never seemed at fault; but

he put me in mind of the juggler and his balls all the time. . . .'

*To his Future Wife.*

'GUILSBOROUGH,
'*Aug.* 20, 1859.

'Steele and I drove over to Lord Spencer's yesterday, and lunched with him and his wife, who was the pretty Miss Seymour. . . . There is nothing very beautiful in the house or grounds, but the old pictures and a magnificent library rather made me envy his Lordship. He is a quiet, gentlemanly, shy young man, very nervous in manner, but very courteous and nice. He mounted us on ponies and we went over his park and through his stud (he is a great breeder of horses) and stables. I am writing this in Steele's billiard-room, which is hung round with my South African spoils—elephant tusks, antelope horns, and buffalo heads. I should like you to see them just once. To me each head tells its tale, and serves to bring back the country in which the species was most plentiful in all its wild freedom—river, hill, wood and plain pass before me as a diorama.'

Early in 1860 another long letter from Livingstone arrived. The italicised passage is noteworthy as an indication of that remarkable patient persistency of character which so largely contributed to his success as a missionary and explorer. Eight years previously, during the Sebitoané expedition, he had made an entry in his diary of a suggestion of his companion that struck him as valuable, and now for the first time it was brought forward and approved, honour being duly given to whom honour was due:

'RIVER SHIRÉ,
'*Nov.* 7, 1859.

'We have traced this river up to its origin in Lake Nyassa or Nyinyesi, in S. Lat. 14° 25′. We steam up 100

miles or so from the confluence, then pass 33 miles of cataracts beginning at 15° 55′, then the Shiré is smooth again right into the Lake. Shirwa, which simply means "big water," is called Tamándua. We found it to be about ninety miles long, but no one could tell us how far off the end of Nyassa lay. The natives think that it goes a long way to the North, then "turns round into the sea." It had a heavy swell on it though there was no wind, and as it never rises or falls much that we could notice, and gives off Shiré constantly (*i.e.* a river from 80 to 150 yards wide, 10 or 12 feet deep, with a 2½ knot current) and never varies more than 2 or 3 feet from the wet to the dry season, it must be a large body itself. But we could not explore it, for we had left Mr. Macgregor Laird's precious punt in a sinking condition, and had to hasten back. Funnel, furnace, deck and bottom all became honeycombed simultaneously. That was £1,200 (not including extras) for 12 months' work. Fairish rather, without any whine of "*doing it all for the good of the cause.*" Well, we found that there is only a small partition between Nyassa and Tamándua, but we could not examine it as we were on foot, and had been longer away than we promised. Along this partition all the slave trade and other trade must pass in order to get away to Mosambique, and other ports on the East coast. We met a large party with an immense number of slaves and elephants' tusks, coming from Cazembé's country, and bought some fine specimens of malachite from them. They were not Arabs but looked somewhat like them, an awfully blackguard-looking lot. When they knew we were English, and saw our revolvers, they slipped off by night, probably thinking the same of us as we did of them.

'*An English Establishment up here, missionary and mercantile, would eat out the slave trade; for the Babisa and other native traders would not go a month farther to E. coast for the same prices we could give here.* I propose to Government to place a small Steamer on Nyassa, a common road could

easily be constructed past the cataracts, and the vessel made to be unscrewed and carried overland.

'We are going ahead in our ideas, you see, but *it's your own idea, suggested long ago in the Kalahari, that I am bent on carrying out.* Look at it and see if I am visionary. Above, or say abreast of the cataracts, the land East of Shiré is in three terraces; the lower, or valley of the river, strongly resembles that of the Nile at Cairo; this one is 1,200 feet high; the next is over 2,000 feet, and three or four miles broad; then the third is over 3,000, or about as high as Table Mountain. I never saw any part better supplied with rills of running water, than these terraces, and my companions, Dr. Kirk, C. Livingstone and Mr. Rae, declare the same thing. Cotton is cultivated extensively over them all. On the last terrace, which is some 12 or more miles broad, and slopes down to Tamándua, rises Mount Zomba, which we ascended and found to be in round numbers between 7,000 and 8,000 feet in altitude. We travelled in the hottest period of the year—that immediately preceding the rains. Shiré Valley was hot and stifling, but no sooner did we ascend to the second terrace than the air had a feeling of freshness. On the 3,000 feet terrace it was delightfully cool, and on Zomba it was cold. We have thus changes of climate within a few miles of each other. Europeans without doubt could live there. The people have no cattle, but cultivate largely, and the trade in cotton could be developed, I think, by a small colony of our own fellow countrymen.

'. . . This might be attained after our heads were low, but the field watered by the Lake and its feeders may be called a cotton country of unlimited extent which really seems superior to the American, for here we have no frosts to cut off the crops, and instead of the unmerciful toil required in the Slave states, one sowing of foreign (probably American) seed, already introduced by the people themselves, serves for crops for three years, even though the plants should be burnt down annually. There may be

evils to counterbalance these advantages, but I don't know them yet. The people are said by the Portuguese to be of quick apprehension. We removed their suspicions that we might be a marauding party, by frankly telling them that we came to mark the paths for our traders to come and buy cotton. We go up to the Makololo country in about three months. We have been turned aside for a time, but do not regret it. Nothing can be done with the Portuguese, they are an utterly effete, worn out, used up race. Their establishments are not colonies, but very small penal settlements. . . .'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Future Wife.*

'Burlington Hotel,
'Cork Street,
'*Dec.* 29, 1859.

'When I had done my breakfast, who should come in but R. M., just arrived from India. The poor boy was so full of his adventures, and so destitute of clothing, that when we had finished the one, we had to go and look for the other. He has not improved, I'm afraid, and won't get on very well with his father, having grown rather noisy and dogmatical, and like most boys, supporting opinions on very feeble arguments, with very strong assertions very loudly enunciated. In the evening I had to go again to see my old uncle Ben, who is staying with my uncle John in Westbourne Terrace, and precious hard work it was to keep the two old parties in good humour. The one cannot hear unless you roar, and the other says he cannot stand a word much above your breath, and last night would not come down to dinner, but lay upon the sofa groaning, and went to bed at seven o'clock to escape from my return to the drawing-room. I am not saying this hardly of the poor old gentleman, God forbid! (he is seventy-seven years of age, very kind to me and

generally very brisk) but just to explain my two bundles of hay.'

Early in 1860 the story of the £6,000 loan reached the ears of William Cotton, through a relative of the borrower. Accurately acquainted as he was with his nephew's circumstances, it was obvious to him that the loss of such a sum could not fail to be a serious barrier to his marriage. He anxiously considered how best this could be removed and soon made up his mind on the subject. As the trusted adviser and business-man of the whole family, he knew that Miss Catherine Clarke had left a legacy to her cousin, and it occurred to him to inform her of the state of affairs. The hint was sufficient for the 'very good, kind, affectionate-hearted friend.' She who had been 'my Father's most generous helper' came forward with delight in the son's behalf, and the amount of the legacy was placed to the credit of his account.

The wedding-day was immediately fixed, and one of the first congratulations to arrive was that of Benjamin Cotton:

'Rayners,
'High Wycombe,
'*Feb.* 27, 1860.

'My dear Nephew,

'My Brother William reports to me that you are really about to enter the most honourable order of Benedicts. I heartily rejoice at the prospect, and am satisfied that your income will provide all that either of you will think necessary to your comfort and happiness, without running away from your country and friends, especially if you have a fair start. I will make you a present of £500 for wedding expenses, though I cannot write an epithalamium—the Song of Solomon must serve for that. I should have sent you a Draft at once, but I did not know how to cross it, and I did not fancy its lying at the Hotel, should you not be in at the moment. As I said last time

I saw you, if you can find any occupation for your time and abilities, that requires a Capital, I will let you have £5,000 at 4 per cent., and will provide that you shall not be called upon to repay it at my death. I am anxious to know where you intend to live. I wish I could hold out anything to induce you to select this neighbourhood, but I cannot. It is without attractions as to society. Pray come and see me, if not before your wedding, very soon after, and bring my future niece, and stay here and try how you both would like such a situation. You may assure her of a *most* warm reception. I am well and do not suffer much from my blind eye, but any lengthened use of the other brings on pain, and I cannot therefore write more than that I am your most affectionate Uncle and Friend.'

When John heard that his old master was going to be married he pleaded hard to be allowed to re-enter his service, but circumstances rendered this impossible. Not long afterwards a letter arrived for William Oswell: 'Can you recommend as a butler a black man named John Thomas? He has mentioned you as a reference.' Oswell replied: 'As a staunch ally in a fight with an elephant, and an absolutely trustworthy man in all the relations of life, *save* that of a butler, in which I have not tried him, I can most highly recommend him.' John was duly engaged.

The wedding took place on April 12, 1860, and on the following day Francis Rivaz wrote his daughter a letter which was indeed an auspicious omen for the new life on which she was entering:

'No one but myself can know the exquisite happiness I have experienced in seeing your destiny identified henceforth with that of the most singularly-gifted man it has ever been my lot to meet. His dignity, intelligence and moral worth, his attainments and experience constitute

the very *beau idéal* of a perfect and accomplished gentleman, the loving Husband, the affectionate Brother, the sincere and faithful Friend. To these virtues are added a simplicity of manner, and a modesty and affability which captivate every heart. Bearing all this in mind, and the consideration, deference and respect *I* personally have invariably experienced at his hands, I bless God from my inmost soul that he has given me *such* a son-in-law, and you, my dearest Agnes, *such* a Husband. That you may both live for very many happy years, a joy, comfort and support to one another, the pride of your family and the admiration of your friends, is the earnest prayer and confident persuasion of

'YOUR LOVING FATHER.

'Give our united love to dear William; we all love him as much as you do. You and he may believe this or not, as you please! I dare not say half of what I think of him.'

## CHAPTER XV.

1860–1865. AGE 42–47.

Home-life and occupations—British Association—Letter to Rev. W. G. Tozer in defence of Livingstone—'And is this my mistress?'—Death of John—Return of Livingstone—Correspondence with Oswell—Collaboration in 'Zambesi and its Tributaries'—Livingstone's humour; irrigating a dispensation of Providence; popular recipe for likeness of a black man; 'my face wrinkled like a gridiron;' 'I feel like a-cussin' and a-swearin' dreadful'—Dedication of the book—Suggestive note by Oswell—'He always did what was brave, and true, and right'—Livingstone describes his mother's death—His love for Oswell—'And yet we never show it.'

MR. AND MRS. OSWELL spent the first year of their married life in the Isle of Wight, at Tunbridge Wells and at St. Leonards. In the spring of 1861 he went all over England house-hunting, and failing to satisfy himself elsewhere, lighted by chance on what he wished for in Florence, a pretty old house at Groombridge, four miles from Tunbridge Wells. He and his wife took possession in the summer.

Eighteen months previously he had written to her: 'My life has been rather a stormy one, and though it never will be, nor do I wish it, an unruffled sea, yet I cannot tell you my longing for, and belief in the happiness—the true and calm happiness—of rest and peace, to be

prized above all tumultuous enjoyment'; and it soon appeared that this was no mere passing fancy, but a deep, settled conviction.

Twenty-four years of storm and stress, of movement, stir, adventure and excitement, had predisposed him to appreciate the quiet pleasures of the country in no common degree. He spent his days in walking, riding and driving with his wife into every nook and cranny of the neighbourhood for many miles round, in collecting the roots of every species of fern, in working in his garden; and his evenings in reading aloud or being read to, in continuing the study of subjects with which he was already familiar and beginning that of others, his powerful brain and retentive memory enabling him to grasp and utilize whatever he applied himself to.

The leisure, too, gave scope for the wider development of what was always the ruling motive of his life—the earnest endeavour to comfort and succour all those who were in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. He put himself unreservedly at the absolute disposal of his neighbours, rich and poor alike, and of his friends and relations at no matter what distance. No weather, no personal consideration, was allowed to interfere with the punctual performance of the self-imposed task. It is noted by his wife as a remarkable fact that on the most important occasions of his being sent for, he had his old Indian fever on him more or less severely; but, unless utterly prostrated by the attack, he would never allege it as an excuse, or indeed suffer it to be mentioned at all. Inhaling chloroform on his handkerchief to deaden the agony in eye and jaw, its invariable concomitant, his indomitable will and overmastering sense of duty would carry him through until the need was over. 'And if I have to give up then,' he would say, 'it doesn't matter.' No moment was inconvenient, no sacrifice or exertion too great, when it was a question of *helping*. His time, his purse, *himself* were to be had for the asking. His sym-

pathy and extreme reticence made him the depository of the secrets of everyone far and near, and his wide experience, acute observation, and rapid decision, the trusted adviser. Anyone who consulted him by letter might rely on a carefully-considered reply by return of post; while to those who applied in person, men, women, or children, he extended the most scrupulous, respectful, and entire attention.

What he was in sickness his wife and children probably know best, but their testimony is supplemented by a great cloud of witnesses. Nowhere was he more at home than in the sick-room. Quiet, decided, cheerful, his very presence gave confidence and support. His manner, though it became sensitively tender, never betrayed surprise, apprehension, or anxiety. Gentle and handy as a woman, his great strength and anatomical knowledge enabled him to move, lift, or carry a patient in the easiest possible way, while a lifelong familiarity with illness taught him to adapt himself with unfailing tact to individual needs. He prayed *with* one, *for* another; to one he read; to another he talked; to a third he listened with sympathetic comprehension; with a fourth, too ill or too suffering to speak, he would share silent endurance. What comfort and peace he brought to those entering the Valley of the Shadow! How many dying lips have gratefully prayed God to bless him! It has been said of him that he was 'so natural' in the presence of death. Small wonder that this was so. Through three visitations of cholera in India, in the Crimea, in Africa, in America, and then for thirty years in England, they met and fought so often, each victor and each vanquished, that they were almost friends. And what a cheer and relief this 'naturalness' was to the survivors, combating as it did the conventionality that dictated gloomy looks, hushed voices, darkened rooms. He went to a funeral with the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection ever present with him and shining in his face, and nothing was more repugnant to his strong,

simple faith than the accentuation of the loss by an extreme indulgence in externals.

*To his Wife.*

'British Association,
'Cambridge,
'*Oct.*, 1862.

'I have been interested in all I have seen or heard here, but I still hold to my opinion that what you actually gain in the sections, is but small, though it may suggest research. One man reads his paper very badly, and another attempts to explain a nearly unintelligible subject in an entirely unintelligible speech. Of course there are exceptions, but as a rule the explanations are not clear. There are so many different opinions too, that a plain man hardly knows whom or what to believe, *e.g.*, yesterday in Section E. a cast of a stone found in Aberdeenshire, and inscribed with characters said at first to be Phœnician, was introduced, and a most learned dissertation (printed) was read out, which of course perfectly satisfied me that the few scrawling letters before me were what they were said to be, "an inscription on a votive tablet to the God of Health, Eshboom, guardian of Wanderers, by Tou-Tou, saturated with sorrow"; and even the cause of this sorrow was attempted to be explained. Well, I thought it was all right, when up jumps a little man who jocularly declares he is sorry he cannot agree with the first opinions but that he must believe his eyes, which tell him the inscription is in Latin, and records the death of the son of some Constantine. Up springs a third who ventured to doubt both the former savants, and gives it as his decided opinion that the inscription is in Greek! It all put me so much in mind of the B. S. H. M. in Pickwick that I nearly laughed.'

In the following month he attended a meeting on Africa at which Bishop Trower presided, and Mr. (after-

wards Bishop) Tozer delivered an address in the course of which he, in effect, attributed Bishop Mackenzie's friction with the natives to Livingstone's advice. Though absolutely indifferent to attacks on his own reputation, Oswell was acutely sensitive when that of his friends was at stake. Accordingly he wrote to Mr. Tozer next morning, forwarding the letter first to the Chairman for confirmation of his recollection.

*Bishop Trower to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'*Nov.* 5, 1862.

'I thank you very much for allowing me to see your very excellent letter to Mr. Tozer, which I forwarded as you request. I was myself surprised at the decided language used by Mr. T. with respect to Dr. Livingstone's share in the responsibility of forwarding the great objects of Christian Missions, by other weapons than such as are purely spiritual. Perhaps as Chairman I ought to have asked him for his authority, but I have no great practice in the work of presiding at such meetings. It flashed through my mind that Bishop Mackenzie (this I think is fact) on his way to punish the offending tribe, expressed to his companions his conviction that he was acting as Dr. L. would have counselled, or would have sanctioned under the circumstances of the case, and when Mr. Tozer spoke as he did, I supposed that some proof had come to light which I had not heard of before, that Bishop Mackenzie had grounds for using that expression. I will write a few lines myself to Mr. Tozer.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to Rev. W. G. Tozer.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Nov.* 4, 1862.

'Will you pardon these few lines? I understood you yesterday to state that the late Bishop Mackenzie would

not have brought himself into opposition with the natives as on two occasions he, in my opinion unfortunately, did, unless he had acted on Livingstone's advice. It struck me at the time you were hardly fair to Livingstone, but the subsequent matter of your discourse put the subject out of my head until too late to say anything in defence of my old friend. My regret is however so strong that I venture to ask you in writing, to-day, that which I ought to have asked you by word of mouth, yesterday. In any future meetings will you, if you can conscientiously, refrain from giving Livingstone quite so large a share of the onus of the late Bishop's mistakes, for such I think we both consider them, judging from what fell from you yesterday? There can be no doubt that on one occasion Livingstone, when he accompanied the late Bishop, was aiding and abetting, and, if you will, heading the expedition, but this was in a matter of slavery, and his interference in such a cause, however much I may regret it, I can understand, knowing his love of right and hatred of oppression; but in the second case in which Bishop Mackenzie thought it right to punish a tribe for refusing him a passage through their territory and illtreating his exploring party, by collecting sixty or seventy men and marching down upon their village and burning it, I do not in the least recognise my old friend's counsel. He himself was far away and had no hand in it *personally* at all events, and if you would infer that Bishop Mackenzie acted in this special instance under general advice from Livingstone, I would beg most distinctly to say I think he must have mistaken his counsellor in the particular application of his advice; for even if Livingstone himself told me that he approved of such a raid, it is so entirely opposed to all I knew of him that I would only credit him with great difficulty. Besides, does it raise our opinion of the Bishop's character to think that he leant so entirely on another as this would imply, or can we think this would have been his line of defence if defence were necessary?

I have sat with Livingstone for seven weeks on the bank of a swampy river because he was so tender of natives' prejudices, and so averse from trying to pass through a tract of country without the full consent of the inhabitants, though pressed by me to disregard their opposition and push on with our horses. If you have positive proof that he approved of Bishop Mackenzie's last act, well and good, I have nothing further to say, but in the absence of this, will you take into your consideration my request that you spare him the odium of this latter business? With all kindly wishes for your own health, and that of your fellow labourers, and for great success to your Mission, and with the earnest hope that God may bless you and your work,

'Believe me,

'Yours very faithfully.'

'OXFORD, CAMBRIDGE, DUBLIN AND DURHAM MISSION TO CENTRAL AFRICA.

*Rev. W. G. Tozer to W. C. Oswell.*

'BURGH, BOSTON,
'*Nov.* 10, 1862.

'I take advantage of the first leisure moment to reply to your letter of friendly remonstrance of the 4th inst. I cannot forbear observing how very much our future course is smoothed for us by the great unanimity with which everything like aggressive warfare has been condemned by all who have written or spoken on the subject, and of this feeling your own letter is, of course, a striking instance. It was very far from my thoughts or intentions (whatever my expression of them may have led you to think) to connect Dr. Livingstone *directly* in any way with the expedition against Manasomba's village. Bishop Mackenzie must have acted in that case entirely on his own judgment, and I suppose went upon the principle that

injuries unavenged were likely to be repeated. What I had in my mind was the unquestionable fact that while the Mission party was under the guidance and authority of Dr. Livingstone, it did unfortunately become involved in hostilities, and to all appearance with his full sanction. In mentioning this I knew well that I should in no way injure the well-established reputation of one whom we all regard as the great Patron in this undertaking, while his presence and sanction on the first occasion of open warfare is a very important fact in palliation, though perhaps not in justification, of what many persons now deplore in the early conduct of the Mission party. For myself, I entirely agree with you in your views about fighting, and in your estimate of Dr. Livingstone's character, and I desire to thank you very heartily for your sympathy and good wishes. Will you kindly show this letter to Bishop Trower, who has written to me on the subject of it?'

Unwilling to claim credit, however well deserved, and anxious as he always was to avoid stirring up bitterness and ill-feeling, Oswell never mentioned this little episode to Livingstone, but incidental allusions in the Doctor's books and correspondence show that his friend's instinct of what his attitude had been was a true one. Thus in a letter written two years later he says:

'Waller, one of the Mission O. and C., does not like my telling that I disapproved of Bishop Mackenzie fighting, although he admits that he was present when I tendered my advice against it.'

In the summer of 1863, while staying at Chigwell, Mrs. Oswell saw her husband and a tall man with an extremely fine figure standing in the garden in earnest conversation. She walked towards them, and they, hearing her footsteps, turned. The tall man was black—it was John. 'And is this my mistress?' he inquired, with a low bow. Early in 1864 news came of his serious illness. His 'master' was from home, but at once prepared to go

to him. Before starting a telegram was put into his hands which, as he writes, 'told me that in the midst of his affectionate service, beloved from the head of the house to the youngest child, trusted and never found wanting, always ready and always willing, this fine, noble fellow had died.' Nevertheless, the one hundred and fifty mile journey was undertaken 'for a last look at the dead face of my friend.'

He put a stone over the grave in Buckhurst Hill Churchyard with the following inscription:

'IN MEMORY OF

WILLIAM JOHN THOMAS,

BORN ABOUT THE YEAR 1825,
DIED MARCH 24TH, 1864.

'The last years of his life were spent in the service of N. Powell, Esq^re^, of this Parish, by whom he was greatly esteemed as a good and faithful servant.

'During the war in the Crimea, attached to an officer of the Rifle Brigade, he gained the general goodwill of the Regiment. In early life he was the right hand of him who on this stone would record the unwavering fidelity, cheerfulness and truth of a most unselfish Companion, Servant and Friend, tried amidst many wanderings, much need, and some danger.

'May God in His mercy, for Christ's sake, pardon master and man, and grant that they may meet hereafter as brothers.'

In June Livingstone came home, and Oswell rejoiced in the prospect of meeting him again and talking over old times:

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'1864.

'MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

'I ought to have written a few lines to you, bad scribe as I am, to welcome you back to England, and I take shame to myself for not doing so long ago; but as I do not feel a bit as if I liked you less, or was one atom the

less sincerely happy that it has pleased God to let you return, I hope you will give me credit for all this, and the remembrance of very much more of ancient kindness and pleasant companionship in times gone by but still very present with *me* at all events. . . . I know your time is taken up by more worthy parties than your old partner . . . and I have but a bit of a cottage, but such as it is I trust you know it is yours as much as mine, and though I am kept in port by a sheet and some little anchors, I shall be only too happy to hear of places to which I may never now go, and see old friends I may perhaps never meet again. . . .

'Believe me,

'Always most affectionately yours.

'My wife would beg to be most kindly remembered to you. . . . She knows full well how often and for how long you were her husband's very kind and true friend.'

*Dr. Livingstone to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'Newstead Abbey,
'Mansfield, Notts,
'1864.

'My dear Friend,

'I should have written long ago to congratulate you on your marriage, but I had sent two letters to the India House, and no answer following, I concluded that I had not your address. Bishop Tozer gave me your card, and from Arthur Vardon I learned that you were Paterfamilias—yea, and popular Lecturer too! At which I mentally took off my cap and bowed my face to the ground. . . . I shall certainly run down to be introduced to your better-half in a month or six weeks, and let you know beforehand.'

A few days later Mr. and Mrs. Webb sent through Dr. Livingstone a pressing invitation to Newstead.

*W. Cotton Oswell to Dr. Livingstone.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'1864.

'. . . You know how much real pleasure it would give me to see you again . . . but just at present, my dear old friend, my leaving home is out of the question. My wife is still very weak and delicate. . . . She is very anxious that I should accept your good host's kind invitation, but she is not fit to be left. . . . You must have given a very much better account of me than I deserve, so just abuse me a little, as in the event of my being able to go down to Newstead I may only give universal dissatisfaction. . . . My popular lectures have been confined to two National Schools, both of which I congratulate myself upon having put to sleep under the hour!'

*Dr. Livingstone to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'NEWSTEAD ABBEY,
'MANSFIELD, NOTTS.

'. . . If you think I have given too high a character to you I am ready to abuse you when we meet, as much as you like, to equalize matters. The Portuguese do the abuse of *me*, so I need no one to lower *my* reputation! With love to Mrs. Oswell.'

Shortly after this Livingstone began to write 'The Zambesi and its Tributaries,' and asked the friend who had shared with him the labours and perils of the journey that ended in the discovery of that river in Sebitoané's country, to revise his MS. as he wrote, giving him *carte blanche* to add, strike out, modify, or suggest as he thought fit.

*W. Cotton Oswell to Miss Agnes Livingstone.*

'*Jany.*, 1865.

'Your letter took me back to old times, old scenes and old friends, though some of them little ones. I hardly know why, but there is one spot on the "high road" from Kolobeng to the Chobé with which I always associate you then little folk, more than any other; and whenever I call back our journey together, which I very, very often do, you all appear to me to start into view so vividly at the turn in the Zougha where Oswell was born, that . . . it is quite within my power to believe I am even now writing to a young lady who is still sitting under those old cameeldorns making "make-believe" tea with the pods and seeds, as she used to do.* Poor Robert too with his habit of wandering too far from the wagons, and running too great a chance, as we used industriously to assure him, of being poked up by a borili or nibbled by an alligator. . . . Tell your Father that I feel I rather rashly accepted the office of overlooker of proof-sheets, and that I fear I am hardly the man to do justice to him. My excellence does *not* lie in critical acumen, though in what it *does* consist I have never yet been able to find out. To the very best of my ability I will do his request, but he must, I feel, know so many others so much better qualified, that if he likes to change, I shall not be at all hurt. Though it will be a labour of love to me, yet I would rather it were *well* done by anyone else. . . .'

Thereupon ensued the most happy, friendly collaboration, each vying with the other in acting to the utmost

* 'As an instance,' writes Mrs. Bruce, 'of his unfailing kindness even to little children, when we were tired out with the long *trek* in the ox-wagon, he, to cheer us up, used to turn the seeds he speaks of into teapots and cups, and make me hostess. I remember it all well, though I must have been only three years old.'

up to the spirit of the undertaking between them. To the very best of his ability William Oswell toiled at the proofs. With the most complete confidence Livingstone accepted and gratefully acknowledged the value of the alterations, omissions, additions and suggestions which were the result. A pleasant vein of humour—a trait in his character which curiously enough does not appear to have received adequate recognition in any life or notice of him—runs through the Doctor's daily letters. The following extracts illustrate this, and are further interesting as showing the gradual development of the book:

'NEWSTEAD,
'*Jan.* 12, 1865.

'. . . Hayward, Q.C., one of the Saturday *Revilers*, left us this morning. Wasn't I civil, that's all! . . . Murray's Literary Friend made a mull in one page—"incapable of irrigation"—I made a hand with pointing fingers and wrote, "It would puzzle a rainmaker, I fear, to irrigate a dispensation of Providence!"'

'NEWSTEAD,
'*Jan.* 21, 1865.

'The contents are very good, but I want, please, a great deal more of them. They are to be at the top of the chapters. For want of them we have gone on an everlasting Chapter I. I have not gone over your last with your corrections yet. I don't like the long-nebbed words, though from our Scotch way I put in too many of Latin origin. You had, to "investigate," a capital word. Professor Owen had, to "note," a *capitaller*. I send you also the same sheet you sent me to-day, but uncorrected, that you may make contents for, and divide chapters. . . . Anything that the natives of this country won't understand (the stoopids!) you will do me an immense good by

throwing light on. . . . In your chaptering and chapter contents a sentence about every paragraph will do. If you think a paragraph ought to be made, write ¶.'

'*9th Feb.*, 1865.

'I send by this post printed contents, the last part of which I altered a little, and you will please alter again if you think anything necessary. . . . I am not idle, though I fear that I may seem pushing you too hard. . . . Don't fear your doing any harm. I don't wish it to be anything but plain and clear, and that you help me much in, by saying where it is muddy. I think if it succeeds it will owe more to you than to me. Some passages in the first proofs I don't understand myself, so I blame the printer. You will see specimens of the illustrations, perhaps the best, as I can't get men to make blacks like their photographs. Take high cheek bones, low foreheads, big lips, mouth from ear to ear, ears like *achter*-wheels, mix *ad sumend*—that is the prescription of all artists except Angus. Agnes is delighted with your photo. You look better than ever, thanks to your better half. I am very old and grey, and face wrinkled like a gridiron. A barber offered to dye my hair for 10s. 6d.! I must be very good-tempered, for I did not fight him. I found Tozer not in high repute in high quarters. It is known how he would have left some 30 or 40 boys and 5 widows whom I brought away. I must mention it, but will do it as gently as I can. He wrote to Bishop Gray (a *prince* of a man) that I took these poor things out at Kongone with closed hatches! Makahela!* I left out all the passages you noted in the proofs. . . . What is the name of the game we used to play by keeping a ball up by the hands, or stumping it against the end of a house? Fives or golf, or what? I am forgetting my English. They throw up

* 'That's a lie.'

Ever affectionately Yours
David Livingstone

a ball by striking it against the ground and as it rebounds catch it. With love.

'(*Saturday Morning.*) I send 17-48. About perfect, I think, so far as the power of the Author extends.'

'15*th Feb.*, 1865.

'Thank Mrs. O. kindly for writing the note yesterday. I changed all the three you mentioned, "soldiers," "East coast," "courageous companions," but held out like a brick against the semicolons being tampered with. I did not like to say my companions had courage and perseverance, because some had neither the one nor the other, but I put it all now on your conscience. . . .

'(18*th.*) I thought to send this in 3 days ago but have been so absorbed in MS. and corrections that I have got quite muddled and dazed. I send paged matter up to 48.'

'*Feb.* 18, 1865.

'The book would not have been half so good but for you. You are quite right about the Portuguese. Like the reformed Quaker in "Uncle Tom" I feel like "a-cussin' and swearin' dreadful" when I think on their villainy, and meant to put it clear though mild—*suaviter in modo*, and into them slick. Mollify if you can. Professor Owen is pleased. He will send the final proofs to you as you will see by enclosure, of which I say "Rejoice with me." All the parts you wish omitted are put out by me. I have been going over the whole with care, but am leading rather a debauched life—Zoological Gardens yesterday, etc., etc. Would "*Et timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*" do in the text at the end of the other story? I can alter "striped pigs" and say another thing quite as true, namely, "reverting to original wild pig of India." What is its proper name, *Borus Indicus* or *Pigus abominationibus?*

'Would it be worth while making special allusion in

conclusion to discoveries of Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa? I mention Fever pills incidentally. Though I think the treatment of Fever one great result of the expedition, yet it would look quackish—too Holloway-pillish!

'I tried with might and main to make the sentence plainer about planting a stake in the ground, and could not. It made me quite nervous. At last I dashed in "Let anyone try to stick a pole in the ground by successive jerks, and he will find how difficult it is to poke it into one spot"!! This I fear amounts to "If you don't believe me, try it yourself." It bamboozles me fairly, and I think it comes into the category of simple ideas which cannot be defined. What is a man? An animal without feathers, and then Mr. Philosopher was beat by the fellows putting down a gamecock stripped of its plumage. There's Plato's mem. for you. . . . You had better send the part about old bachelors marrying young wives to Owen, and then you will see what he says about it. C. is one of them. The wretched fellow may think I am personal, and not anxious for the good of the Commonwealth alone.'

'*April* 14, 1865.

'I don't lament having been stupid in our way of correcting, etc., at first, for we have now the pleasure of finding that we have improved. If we were perfect we should be sitting down like old Sandy, crying because we hadn't another world to conquer. I was at Academy dinner on Saturday and Crystal Palace. Agnes is doing it all, racing me off my feet. Poor old man! Hope your Agnes will be more merciful. Love to Mrs. Oswell.'

'*April* 15, 1865.

'I don't understand why the *hiatus* has taken place unless it has been because M. and C. saw my leanings to be so strong, in their estimation, towards you. And I

confess that I have full confidence in your judgment and none at all in C.'s. It was rather stupid in me not to see you tolerated the "Transference" par., but I usually x x all you don't like at once, without reading the sentence again. A bit of fun in another page C. put out, and I put in, very much because he did put it out. It was about the way of settling disputes, which I think you have not seen, but there is no harm in it.'

'*April* 16, 1865.

'I sent you to-day the last of the MS., 889-913 I think, with Agnes' autograph of *Finis*. I laboured hard to get it all done before Mr. and Mrs. Webb came home, and sent the MS. off after the Postman. I had a headache, and it went off with the packet, so I hope it won't come to you with it. Agnes was transcribing a note to it when we had to bundle up, and she ran after the letter-carrier, so she sends the footnote awanting, that you may put it in before it goes off to the Printer. I sent off 165-198 for paging as you recommended. . . . I think I attended to all you mentioned as requiring my attention. I said "After leaving the oxen at Johanna the *Orestes* towed," etc. I think this is what you felt the want of. Is it not? I put in two short paragraphs. They expect me to say something good about Mackenzie, and he deserved it.'

'25*th April*, 1865.

'. . . I am rather low in my spirits altogether. In turning up all my papers and consigning some to oblivion this morning, I lighted on the very appropriate quotation which Mrs. Oswell kindly sent, and which by my stupidity has been omitted. You have to bear with me. It is not intentional, you know.'

The reference is to the following sentence in one of the daily letters:

'Do you remember where you talk of birds being a sure sign of water? My Wife thinks you might perhaps like to back your statement by David's, *vide* Psalm civ. 10, 12.'

*Dr. Livingstone to W. C. Oswell.*

'8, Dover Street,
'5 *May*, 1865.

'I apologised to Mr. Murray on your behalf. It would have been a pleasant dinner-party for you—they always are—but I dare say you are better beside your better half and the bairns. I have no doubt the latter prefer you to be where you are.

'When speaking of the natives being men with every attribute of human kind, will it do to say that not only are the mixtures of races "fertile" but they readily coalesce, as in the case of transference of colour already mentioned? In that of vitality, shall we mention the strength imparted by black nurses?'

. . .

'*May* 22, 1865.

'I have dedicated to Lord Palmerston with Sir Roderick's consent and advice. It is unusual to dedicate twice to the same man. It is short, and will come to you, "that statesman who has ever had at heart the amelioration of the African race." I would like to say a word of what he has done in contrast with what has not been done on the E. coast, or in admiration of the beneficial effects of the policy which he has so long laboured to establish on the coasts of Africa. Will you add a sentence to the latter effect in proof? and also please put an acknowledgment in Preface: "I have to acknowledge the obliging readiness of Lord Russell in lending me the drawings by the artist of the Expedition, which, with the photographs by Charles Livingstone and Dr. Kirk, have materially assisted in the illustrations." Also put at the end of the

Preface the date Newstead Abbey, 16th April, 1865. I ask you to do this because I am off to Burnbank Road, Hamilton, to-morrow, Tuesday evening. Would the words "It is with sincere gratitude I thank my friends Professor Owen and Mr. Oswell for many valuable hints and other aid in the preparation of the volume" grate upon your ear? Insert them to oblige me.

'D. L.

'Insert or erase what you choose. It is too late for the view of Shupanga.'

As a rule, Oswell's letters to Livingstone at this time were restricted to the business of the book, but he appends a thoughtful and suggestive note to one of them:

'Though I think your paper in Appendix admirably written, I am not a believer in your theory, because I think that no one nation ever had an unlimited power of progression given it, but that each, in its own degree, is bound to carry out some small portion of the great universal scheme of Creation, of which we know nothing; the lack and the abundance in some mysterious way being made *both* to *add* to the perfecting of the scheme. But my opinions are not of much consequence to you or anyone else for that matter; so to help you as well as I can to eke out your theory, I should say that *one* of the greatest causes why such countries as India and China have stopped, and even retrograded, is that they have both been conquered and overrun. From the time the Mahommedans conquered India, there has been no art-fostering Government, and the remains of old sculptures of the times of the native kings—records now half-buried in many places, in sand—attest the skill of former times, now not only retarded but lost. A highly-civilized, *developing* people (according to your idea) was conquered by a foreigner and their own arts destroyed, and the Conqueror's not introduced. Indeed, the Mahommedans under Sultan

Mahommed were very different from the Mahommedans of Granada. The same thing might, I suppose, be said of the Chinese conquered by the Mongols.'

*Dr. Livingstone to W. F. Webb.*

'*May* 27, 1865.

'I have been reading "Tom Brown's Schooldays," a capital book. Dr. Arnold was a man worth his weight in something better than gold. You know Oswell was one of his Rugby boys? One could see his training in always doing what was brave and true and right.'

*Dr. Livingstone to W. C. Oswell.*

'Burnbank Road,
'Hamilton,
'*27th June*, 1865.

'I thank you very much for the kind note expressing your own and your Wife's sympathy on the occasion of the departure of my Mother. It severed many tender ties, but the event had points in it which were cause for thankfulness. She was pretty well for a week; then a change appeared only an hour before the close, in a little quicker breathing. My sister said to her, "The Saviour has come for you, I think, Mother, you can lippen (Scotticè, trust or commit) yourself to Him?" She replied, "Oh yes," with a tone of assent, gave her last look to our little girl (Anna Mary) and said, "Bonny wee lassie," gradually closed her eyes, gave a few long breaths, and all was still.

'When going away last time she said she would have liked if one of her "laddies" had laid her head in the grave, and that wish has been granted. She was buried on 24th. While giving thanks now with more and more of personal interest for all the dead who have died in the Lord, this was very interesting to me, inasmuch as I may possess the same physical organization, and the close of

my career may be with the same collectedness, but it is not likely I shall live long. With love from Agnes and self to Mrs. Oswell,

'I am ever affectionately.'

It will be remembered, in curious confirmation of this anticipation, that when death came to the great explorer, eight years later, he was conscious and collected to the very last.

*Dr. Livingstone to W. F. Webb.*

'*Aug.* 12, 1865.

'Mr. and Mrs. Oswell came up to say farewell. He offers to go to Paris at any time to bring Agnes home,* or do anything a father would. I love him with true affection, and I believe he does the same to me; and yet we never show it.'

* He did so the following year.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1865–1869. AGE 47–51.

Letters from Livingstone from Marseilles and Bombay—'My adopted one'—Lady Baker—Anxiety as to the fate of Livingstone—Letters to Miss Livingstone and Sir Roderick Murchison—E. W. Cooke, R.A., and his family—African trophies restored—A tusk for the Irish Famine Fund—Defence of Sir Samuel Baker—Presence of mind in illness—Livingstone writes from Lake Bangweolo—His indignation at 'Instructions' of R.G.S.—His death falsely reported—Oswell's letters to Miss Livingstone; 'I will come from the end of the earth if you want me.'

*Dr. Livingstone to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'MARSEILLES,
'*Aug.* 19, 1865.

'I think Agnes is all right. Rev. M. Calliatte, the Father of her instructor . . . lives principally at a village near Dreux . . . she is with them there . . . during the vintage. Mrs. Calliatte is sister to Mrs. Lemire, whom you remember at Motito. . . . Agnes goes to Paris in a month or so. . . . Poor thing, she was very much cut up by parting with me . . . and felt rather alone in the world. I told her to write to you in any case in which she required counsel, as I am quite sure that you would give her wise hints for her guidance. We sail hence to-morrow. God bless you all.

'Ever affectionately yours.'

*Dr. Livingstone to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'Bombay,
'*Sept.* 29, 1865.

'As I may not have leisure when nearer my starting-point, I write a note by this mail to say that I am getting on pretty well in the way of preparation for leaving in November. I have got 8 Africans, some of whom have a knowledge of carpentry and smith work, and they may be useful if we try to build up a canoe for navigating Tanganyika. I am to get some men of the Marine Battalion who have roughed it already, and can manage buffaloes. The Government insures their pay, pensions, allowances, as if on actual duty for the State. His Excellency is a first-rate man and enters into my project with great heartiness and good-will. The reason why I wish to take some tame buffaloes is I think there is a chance of their being able to withstand the poison of the tsétsé. They are wonderfully like the wild *narris*. I have seen horns with the genuine curves. They are surely more than half-brothers, though the males have not the horny forehead. I mean them to be beasts of burden. If they stand the tsétsé then we shall be conferring a boon. The Sultan of Zanzibar is expected here on a visit on the 5th October, so I shall confer with him as to getting supplies by way of Quilloa. The Governor is going to treat him with distinction, and, by way of giving him some new ideas, will show him all now doing in Bombay. Col. Playfair, the Resident at Zanzibar, has left, ill of heart disease. I wish Kirk could get that post. He would be invaluable there, but we have no influence. I am going to sell *Lady Nyassa* if I can. I suppose I shall not get more than £2,000, but it's all right, I tried to do good though I failed. The Governor thinks that it is a considerable step in advance to get the Portuguese to

be angry and write by Lacerda. A few years ago they would not have minded.'

In reply to a letter speaking of the success of the book, and enclosing some of the reviews that had appeared, Livingstone writes:

'Bombay,
'*Jan.* 1, 1866.

'Many happy returns of this day to you and yours, and a blessing from above on them all. I was very much delighted with your letter of Nov. 24.

'I got the *Saturday* and *Athenæum* reviews which are favourable enough, perhaps too much so. My old antagonist John Crawford of the *Examiner*, not quite so much so, but still fair, and the *Reader*, by Winwood Reade, enough to make me shut my eyes. If it touches up the Portuguese to change their infamous system I shall be content. . . . Baines's book contains very little. Old Crawford says his description of Victoria Falls is better than ours—that's a fib! I say *ours*, for without your aid the critics would have had lots of faults to find. My love to Mrs. Oswell and the bairns, also to Mrs. Vardon. From

'Yours ever affectionately.

'P.S.—Kirk has got an appointment at Zanzibar as, I believe, Assistant Political Agent. I am glad of this, for he is a good fellow in every way. He was telegraphed to yesterday by the Governor, who said to me it was a great recommendation to him that I was anxious that he should be there. I am to start on the 3rd. I am all ready and very tired at being idle. The *Thule* is one of Sherard Osborne's late fleet and is going as a present from this Government to the Sultan of Zanzibar. I am a free passenger and have the honour to make the formal presentation. This will give me a little lift in the eyes of the Arabs. I take two mules as a sort of experiment too, in

case the buffaloes have not done well at Zanzibar. I have been thinking that a settlement of the Sultan's at the mouth of the Rovuma, if they could only be persuaded to make it a free one, might be a step in advance. But few if any of his people can see that free labour and free trade would, in the end, prove the most profitable. They would stand the malaria better than Europeans, for we whites do the most foolish things possible in the most unhealthy localities. I think Kirk will do what he can to promote freedom and commercial intercourse. . . . Thanks for remembering Agnes and letting her know she is not forgotten.'

After Livingstone's departure Oswell wrote frequently to his daughter, whom he affectionately regarded as his adopted child :

*W. Cotton Oswell to Miss Agnes Livingstone.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Sept.* 10, 1866.

'. . . By the way, have you read Baker's last book? If not, you ought to do so; it is very good and amusing. His wife must be a trump. I went to see her in London and lunched with her, as I knew Baker of old. She hardly looks older than "my adopted one," and shows but slight signs of having endured great hardships and perils. Baker himself is a very good fellow. . . . His title is well earned. *Albert* Nyanza I suspect touched the Queen's heart, though the recipient is more than worthy of any honour she might confer.

'Tell your Father when you write to him that I hold fast to his friendship . . . and hope he will believe in my truth and steadfastness.'

Later, when a report reached England of the Doctor's death, Oswell of course gave what cheer he could. It is

touching to note how he balances between the fear of saying Peace, when there might be no peace, and of adding an unnecessary feather-weight to the heavy load of anxiety of the devoted daughter:

'Brighton,
'*March* 8, 1867.

'I live in hopes that the whole story may be the oft-told one and altogether untrue. . . . God grant it may be so, my poor little friend. It seems impossible to me . . . that your Father and my dear friend should have been removed from an *unaccomplished* work. To me, as yet, the story does not bring conviction; the only feeling like reality I have, is an earnest desire to have been at his side. . . . If God has been pleased to take him I am convinced we have not the truth about it yet. I write these few lines . . . in the full hope of seeing my dear friend in this world—and if not—God pardoning me for all my many sins, may I be permitted to see him in Heaven hereafter. If I can do anything of any kind for you write and let me know.

'Very tenderly and affectionately yours.'

A fortnight passed, and what purported to be full particulars and confirmation of the death arrived. Just at first, overcome with grief, Oswell shut himself up alone for some hours. And then he came to his wife, and with a changed expression and cheerful voice, said:

'I have been writing to Sir Roderick Murchison to tell him that I believe the story to be a lie. I have most carefully considered it, and I find the men talk of returning after the skirmish in which they say Livingstone was killed, to bury their dead. Why, not one of them would stop to bury his *father*, if there was the slightest risk. If the rascals have lied in one part of their story, I disbelieve it all. They ran away and left him, that is all.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to Sir Roderick Impey Murchison.*

'BRIGHTON,
'*March* 22, 1867.

'As a very kind friend of Livingstone's you will excuse my writing to you to point out what appears to me an impossibility in the story of the Johanna men. . . . Coupled with the suspicious fact noted by you that no relic was brought back by these nine (so-called) witnesses of our friend's death, does not their assertion that they returned to bury him, throw discredit on their story? By their own account they had not the courage to stand by their living leader; whence then the devotion which prompted them to linger about the spot and undertake so dangerous an office as his burial? Africans attach but small importance to the last rites, and unless bound to Livingstone as the Makololo were, none would attempt to pay them at the slightest risk to themselves. I know nothing of the Comoro Islanders, but should hardly suppose them to be more scrupulous than the men of the mainland; and if not, may not the improbability of their story in this particular give us an additional hope that our friend is still alive?'

But the months went on and brought no contradiction and no news.

*W. Cotton Oswell to Miss Agnes Livingstone.*

'GROOMBRIDGE.

'It is a very long while since I have heard a word ot you all; will you send me one? I have not written so often to you as I felt inclined to do, for in this state of suspense it seemed useless to talk of the one great subject which filled both our hearts, and worse than useless to talk of indifferent matters. But I now crave to know how you all are, so like a good lassie send me a line. . . . I

feel full of hope still. Is your grandfather at Kuruman? From being such a bad correspondent I have lost sight of nearly all my kind African friends, more shame to me for my idleness. How are the boys and the little sister? I have told you that if I can at any time help to do anything for you, you must let me know, and I live in the faith that you will. God bless you, my child. . . . My wife desires her very kind love to you, and

'I am always,

'Affectionately yours.'

This year brought a new interest into his life. E. W. Cooke, the Royal Academician, began to build his house, 'Glen Andred,' on a beautiful spot he had chosen at Groombridge, and in 1868 came down to live there with his mother and three sisters. Acquaintanceship between the two families rapidly ripened into affection. The friends and guests of one became the friends and guests of the other. William Oswell's children knew no greater pleasure than going to Mr. Cooke's. Many of his Academy pictures owe bright-coloured pebbles, fish, boats and other minor accessories to their suggestions and his good-natured readiness to gratify and amuse them. The expressive gesticulations, the alert, restless figure, the clear, wide-set blue eyes, the marvellously rapid, marvellously sure hand darting from palette to canvas, from canvas to palette, had a perfect fascination for them. His fondness for playing clever practical jokes was another point of attraction in him for little people. One Christmas day Mrs. Cooke remarked that the pudding was not nearly so light as when she used to stir it. The following year it was set before her with a cover over it, and as soon as this was removed, to the astonishment of the whole party, rose slowly into the air until it touched the ceiling. 'There, mother,' exclaimed her son, 'I hope that's light enough to please you!' It was a perfect representation of a pudding which he had painted on a bladder filled with hydrogen.

Who that saw her can ever forget that lovely old lady?—the proudly acknowledged mainspring of the household, the point to which everybody gravitated, the centre round which everything revolved. What a picture she was, as, daintily arrayed in silk and lace, and smoothing down her dress with soft, wrinkled, nervous hands, she sat in state in her armchair by the fire, surrounded by courtiers old and young, now deeply engaged in an equal discussion with one of the finest intellects of the day, now telling or listening smilingly to a child's story. Keen-witted, hardly deaf, her playful repartees were singularly smart and ready. 'Come along with me, Grannie, for a paddle in the canoe,' cried her grandson Conrad to her one day, when she was past ninety. 'No, thank you, my dear,' she merrily replied, 'it's meant to hold only one savage!'

And then there was kind Miss Harriette, an excellent pianist, a capital letter-writer, who knew more about the English cathedrals and their architecture than all their vergers and deans put together; Miss Laura, the admirable linguist, with her cordial manners; and Miss Mary, worn to a shadow by asthma, yet always cheery and witty, always with an amusing story to tell most amusingly.

The *élite* of the scientific and artistic world found its way to that clever, easy, hospitable house and thence to William Oswell's, who with his wife heartily enjoyed and appreciated the constant, friendly intercourse with men wondered at.

On his return from Africa he had distributed many of the skins, heads, horns and curiosities, collected on his travels there and in India, among his relations and friends, but the bulk of them he had given to his great friend Sir Thomas Steele. When he married and had a home of his own, he used often to regret that these were not round him. It was therefore with the utmost satisfaction that he hailed an unexpected proposal from Sir Thomas to restore them; and many were the happy hours he spent in arranging them to the best advantage in his hall.

In January, 1868, he was deeply concerned to read the accounts of the terrible distress in Ireland. Eager to contribute to the relief fund, he was, just then, not in a position to do so substantially. After consideration, he determined to sell an unusually fine elephant tusk. The decision involved a very real sacrifice. It was not the intrinsic value of the tusk, great though it was, but he prized each specimen in his collection, so recently restored, for the memories it recalled of his happy hunting-grounds. However, the sale was cheerfully effected, and the proceeds devoted to the fund.

Shortly after this he again laid his trophies under contribution on behalf of Mr. Cooke, who had, he was told, admired certain heads and expressed a wish that he had some like them in the porch at Glen Andred. He took them over himself, and a few days later Mr. Cooke brought three exquisite sketches as a thank-offering.

Six years previously, it may be remembered, he came to the rescue of Livingstone when he believed him to be unjustly aspersed. He now enters the lists for Sir Samuel Baker, against the *Spectator*, and combats the ungenerous suggestions made by that journal in whatever directions he thinks he can most usefully do so:

*To Miss Agnes Livingstone.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Jan.* 8, 1868.

'I cannot attribute to Baker one atom of the wretched feeling which the *Spectator* hints at. I think him a great fellow and a plucky one, and, as I have written to Sir R. Murchison to-day, not likely to fancy his own great success would be dimmed by your Father's greater. They are both great travellers—granted—but as far as exploration goes, the dear old Doctor can count thousands of miles against Baker's hundreds. In my opinion he is

easily the first of all travellers alive or dead. . . . Perhaps after all the Doctor (though I for one fervently hope not) will return upon his tracks. He is so plucky, enduring, and *awfully obstinate* that I'm sure he will not if he can help it.'

After her marriage Mrs. Oswell discontinued keeping a diary in deference to the view of her husband that the practice tended to unwholesome introspection and the perpetuation of many petty or painful incidents which would be much better forgotten. But he now frankly confessed that the convenience far outweighed the disadvantages. And so, for the next twenty-six years, he continually begged her to note this, or tell him when that happened, and 'your Mother's Journal' became a regular institution—a book of reference, and, on occasion, a court of final appeal. From it it is henceforward possible to get glimpses of his quiet, useful, unselfish life.

*Journal, April* 26, 1868. — 'Read "History of the Jewish Church." William thinks Stanley "vapours a good deal about Bible truths." '

In May of this year one of his children fell out of a high wagonette. Concussion of the brain ensued, and the resulting sickness was apparently unconquerable, but his watchful care suggested the application of eau-de-cologne and cold water to the head the moment the slight flush after food was observed, thus staving off the spasm until power was gained to retain some small nourishment; and the life that had been despaired of, was preserved.

*Journal.*—'Mr. —— had an apoplectic fit. William gave competent and speedy assistance until the arrival of the doctor.'

'*July* 2.—A man drowned at Ashurst Park during a large garden party. William stayed till eight o'clock helping to drag the pond.'

Towards the end of September Miss Livingstone wrote in the wildest spirits that she had received authentic news of the safety of her father. '"Alive and well, but destitute,"' replied Oswell, 'that's all right. What *can* he want with trousers where no one else has them? Thank God that he is all right. . . . My Wife and I will run over and do ourselves the pleasure of looking at your happy face. . . . Hurrah for the Dad about Midsummer!'

The promised visit, a somewhat hurried one, was paid in the next few days.

*W. Cotton Oswell to Miss Agnes Livingstone.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Oct.*, 1868.

'My wife and I much fear the impression left in your minds must have been that we were two greedy guests (by the way, we did not expect anything to eat), who after stuffing ourselves as much as we possibly could, immediately we could do no more, hurried away in hot haste. Do you remember the story of the un-missionaried Americans seeing their missionaried brethren sit down to a capital dinner, and, willing to partake of it, being stopped, and told they could not until they had learnt "the Book"; of their retirement and study of "the Book," their return the next anniversary dinner, their eager anticipation of good things, and the swelling chorus of hungry voices pealing forth "Moses, Aaron, Nimrod, Noah, Belshazzar, Hivites, Hittites, Perizzites, I eatee, I drinkee him"? Something like this must our advent, our eating and our departure have appeared to you. "How d'ye do, Groombridge, Sevenoaks, Knockholt? Where's dinner? We eat him. Good-bye, can't eatee him any more." We will behave better when we are asked again. Asked again indeed! Who would ask such guests?'

On reaching home he found a letter from the Doctor awaiting him:

'*8th July*, 1868,
'Near Lake Bangweolo.

'My dear Friend,

'You must take this as all I can give you at present. I began a letter for you to be finished at Ujiji, but an inundation prevented my going that way. A letter to Lord Clarendon, if published, will explain what I have been doing. I hope I am not premature in saying that the sources of the Nile arise in from 10° to 12° South—in fact where Ptolemy placed them. The Chambezé is, like the Chobé, 40 or 50 yards broad, but the country is not like that at all, it is full of fast flowing perennial burns. We cross several every day. I crossed Chambezé in 10° 34′ South. It runs West, into Bangweolo. Leaving that Lake it changes its name to Luapula, then into Lake Moero, and on leaving it the name Lualaba is assumed. The Chambezé, Luapula and Lualaba receive thirteen streams from 30 to 50 yards broad and always crossed either by bridges or canoes. Three of these I have not yet seen. Then Lualaba is joined by Lufira, a large river which drains the western side of a great valley in which lie extensive copper mines, from which we see bars of copper from 75 lbs. to a cwt. all over the country. They are made like capital I's. Lufira is fed by five streams. Another line of drainage runs into Lake Liemba. One, the Lofu, I measured at a ford—294 feet, waist deep, flowing fast towards the end of the dry season. This has 11 burns from 4 to 15 yards broad, as its sources. To these four a fifth, flowing into Tanganyika, must be added. There are 23 sources flowing in three lines of drainage. Now the uncertain part is west of Tanganyika. Some say that large body of water goes past that Lake, on its west, into Lake Chowambé, which I take to be Baker's Lake; others, that it enters Tanganyika, and still goes to Chowambé by a river named Loanda. That is the part I

have yet to explore, and from everlasting tramping on foot, is tiresome. I have suffered much needless annoyance by two blockheads, the busybodies of the Council, writing "Instructions" for my guidance and demanding all my notes—"*copies if not the originals.*" Because the Society pays one-fourth part of my expenses I am to sit down as a slave and copy for it the only property I shall have left. If I were to get £2,000 after finishing, instead of nothing after finishing the £2,000, I would not be so annoyed by the snobs asking private memoranda. . . . Speke preferred to burn all his notes and observations, too, to submitting them to the busybodies of the Council. One of them . . . has altered my geographical position most recklessly, and tacked on 200 miles of Lake to the Nor'west of Nyassa! I wish a gentleman had been employed who knew the *usus loquendi* of words. X., who I suppose penned the "Instructions," uses *hydrography* for rainfall. The word is restricted to the survey of coasts or inland waters having a navigable communication with the Ocean.

'I am "*to make a survey!*" I preferred to follow Sir Francis Beaufort's advice to Arctic explorers: "Gentlemen, remember you go on discovery, not on survey," *i.e.*, never spend time in measuring, if you can discover. I am "*to take latitudes every night!!!*" I hope you are playing with your children instead of being bothered by idiots. In looking back to Kolobeng, I have one regret, and that is that I did not feel it my duty to play with my children as much as to teach the Bakwains. I worked very hard at that, and was tired out at night. Now I have none to play with. So my good friend play while you may. They will soon be no longer "bairns." My kind love to their Mother and them.'

In May, 1869, Oswell's favourite sister-in-law had a serious illness, and until the end of August he was constantly backwards and forwards in attendance on her.

*To his Wife.*

'London, 1869.

'You will be most thankful, I know, to hear that dear little J. is well through her trouble so far, and that she bore the operation beautifully. She is much, much stronger than I or anyone expected. . . . I have no fears at all; she will go on all right with God's goodwill. Fergusson operated, and kind old Sir Thomas Watson was present, looking most benign. All that she will want now, I trust, is good feeding. I knew it was to take place to-day, in all probability, but thought it better not to keep you on the stretch. If all goes well I shall be down to-morrow.'

Next day he writes:

'I could not come. We had no nurse, no one fit to move J., so I stayed, much as I should have liked to be with you. It was right to do so. God bless you.'

On July 13 the paper gave so circumstantial an account (which, however, was contradicted a few days later) of the death of Livingstone that there appeared to be no loop-hole for hope. Oswell was terribly cast down, and counted more than usual on the few solitary hours that on such occasions not only enabled him to master his own sorrow, but to bear and lighten that of others. But the post brought news that his sister-in-law had had a relapse, and without a moment's delay he started off to London.

*To his Wife.*

'19, Cowley Street,
'Westminster.

'I'm afraid I was rather hasty with you this morning, but Livingstone's death weighed heavy on me, and I felt

unsatisfied he should have been taken, and stern—unpleasant enough, I dare say. Forgive me. . . . I posted dear Nelly's card directly I arrived. God bless her, she's a trump. Make my *amende* to her if I have seemed grumpy. I cannot get Livingstone out of my head, and the thought sits there like lead, tell her. This must account for my ill-behaviour. God grant she may find her child going on all well. Give my love to her and to my little ones. God bless and keep us all. Take care of yourself.'

*Journal, October* 2, 1869.—'William read "Chips from a German Workshop" aloud to me with the greatest interest.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to Miss Agnes Livingstone.*

'Ramsgate,
'*Nov.* 9, 1869.

'. . . If I can do anything for you, you will ask me, won't you? I have sometimes thought that you might want funds for any little purpose, but you would always ask me if you did. It would give me more pleasure than I can tell you to be of some service to you, and you will remember that I knew your Mother and Father when you were but a little dot. You must not be angry with me for mentioning this, but you might like to have a conviction that there is one who would always do all he could in any way for your own sake, your Mother's and your Father's. The plucky old fellow doesn't seem to think of coming out with his task, self-set, unfinished. How devoutly I trust he may bore his way up the Nile. God bless and keep you.'

In a later letter he says:

'If you are within a hundred miles of me let me know and I will come and shake you by the hand, and will always come even to the end of the earth if I can be of any use to you, or you want me.'

## CHAPTER XVII.

1869–1873. AGE 51–55.

Building of Hillside — Uncarted — Franco-German War — Long letters from Livingstone as to Nile sources—His admiration of the pluck of Miss Tinné—First day at Hillside—'Your old friend Thomas Steele'—Livingstone writes finally from Tanganyika about the Nile sources—Professor Owen on sucking bones—British Association at Brighton—'Stanley a very plucky fellow'—Oswell reads lessons in church—'You quitted yourself uncommon well' —Sudden death of Sir John Lees.

It had always been Oswell's desire to purchase and add to Florence, but his landlord, wishing to occupy the house himself, gave him notice. There was nothing to suit him in the neighbourhood, and he and his wife found themselves under the disagreeable necessity of making up their minds to a fresh start elsewhere. As soon as this reached Mr. Cooke's ears he hurried over to call on the Rev. J. J. Saint, the Rector of Speldhurst and Squire of Groombridge, and as a result of their conference wrote that they had agreed no stone should he left unturned to avert the great loss of the departure, and that if Mr. and Mrs. Oswell would allow themselves to be persuaded to remain and build, Mr. Saint was kindly prepared to offer them the choice of a site anywhere on his property. One was soon fixed on, a mile or so from Florence, sheltered from the North and East and looking over Broadwater Forest and the Crowborough and Ashdown Ranges; and thereupon

Oswell, with his wife's assistance, set about making plans for the new house. Dissatisfied, however, with their work, they took Mr. Cooke's advice and put the matter into the hands of Mr. Norman Shaw.

*Journal, May* 10, 1870.—'A day to be recorded with a white stone. Mr. Shaw, the two Mr. Punnetts,* Mr. Cooke, William and I, Offey and all the children, met on the sunny hillside where the ground was pegged out exactly on the spot my husband had chosen. We all drank success to the building inside the string boundary. . . . Later, Offey and I leant against the bank William has thrown up, looking at the slanting sunlight on the fresh grass —a *living* spring green—watching the children's pretty play and thinking we might hereafter call up the sweet, calm remembrance as a picture of "what once was bright, remains so still." My husband so happy about it. . . .'

*Journal, May* 31, 1870.—'First stone laid of Hillside. Mr. Saint and his two daughters, Mr. Whitelock, Charlie Lees, my sisters Ellen and Louy, and our whole household present at a short service. Mr. Saint's prayer beautiful, my husband's speech afterwards more than beautiful. Sang Psalm c. Dear old Mrs. Cooke wrote a poem for the occasion.'

For many months to come much, almost all, of Oswell's time was spent in acting as Clerk of the Works. At the site early and late, no detail of the building escaped him. The men became devoted to him and strained every nerve to please him. Before they knew him to speak to they had conceived a high respect for his muscles.

One morning the sound of loud swearing and violent abuse caught his ear. He hurried to the spot and found a burly fellow standing up in a cart full of material, surrounded by an angry crowd. Pushing his way through them, he told him to hold his tongue, and when no notice

* The builders.

was taken of his demand, sprang into the cart, and picking up the offender by his collar and waistband, pitched him out and ordered him off the ground.

With this solitary exception there was not the smallest unpleasantness or hitch from first to last.

In August he had a sharp attack of fever, and, unable to get rid of it, yielded to the persuasion of his wife and the advice of the Doctor by going to Eastbourne for a week.

*To his Wife.*

'Burlington Hotel,
'Eastbourne,
'*Sept.* 3, 1870.

'I have taken up my quarters here all right. God bless and keep you all. I feel as strange away from you as I possibly can, pretty nearly shy in my old life. . . . What an unexpected end to this horrid war! Thank God!'

'*Sept.* 4.

'A most lovely, breezy day, thoroughly enjoyable, so bright, bracing and fine that I have been regretting I did not bring you all with me. What say you to sending the two boys by the 10 o'clock train to-morrow morning? . . . I say *boys* because they can better be left to themselves than girls, not because I love them more. I don't like spending a heap of money on myself, and giving no one else pleasure. But all this is for your especial decision. . . . Give my love to the darlings. God bless and keep them and you.'

'*Sept.* 5.

'I have been looking for my boys all day, but suppose you have not thought it well to send them. If it holds fine I should be delighted to have the little fellows. . . . A German in this hotel tells me he has advices from Paris that the French are *determined to resist*. The puzzle

to me is with whom is the King of Prussia to make peace. The Emperor is dethroned, but no other real Government can be said to be enthroned *en permanence*. Paris can make no real resistance; a mob is not an army. I wonder at Trochu, an Orleanist, accepting office, but I suppose he has done it for his country's good, putting aside all political feeling. . . . I shall be very glad to be home again on Thursday or Friday.'

'*Sept.* 9.

'I fully intended returning to you to-day, but the boys have so enjoyed their six or seven hours on the beach that I cannot find it in my heart to tear them away before having another run, so look for us to-morrow at 6.30, and believe one of us very glad to get back. . . . I cannot understand Trochu's and Favre's republican *truth* of which they make so much, but perhaps they may be right, and have an army in Paris fit to repulse the Prussians; but I must say I should in my ignorance have thought the reverse. They are obliged to talk big, of course. I hear it said that McMahon charged twelve times at the head of his columns, and the Emperor once or twice, but that the soldiers became mutinous and would not obey orders.'

The following letter from Livingstone was not despatched for nearly a year after it was written:

'*October*, 1869,
'Manyuema Country (say
'150 Miles West of Ujiji).

'My dear Friend Oswell,

'I have not the faintest prospect of being able to send a letter for many months to come, but I want to be partially prepared for the time when the bustle of putting up a parcel may arrive. I don't feel it right on these occasions to give my friends a hurried scrawl, and when an Arab party is met with going to the coast, the headman

can scarcely be expected to feed 200 or 300 people for 2 or 3 days, merely to let a foreigner pen words which may be against all Arabs in general, and himself in particular. I shall try and give you now what may be of permanent interest if, as usual, it be viewed through the indulgent medium of your friendship. Although it may not have been fully explained in my letter to you from Ujiji, you must have learned a little otherwise, about what I called the central line of drainage of the great upland valley that begins in 12° South Lat. It goes through Lakes Bangweolo, Moero and another. I saw it as the Lualaba going out of Moero and away North-west before I went to Ujiji. As soon as I recovered from a Pneumonia, which was worse than ten fevers—that is fevers treated by any medicine and not the dirt supplied to Bishop Mackenzie at the Cape—I went fifty miles up Tanganyika, or Southwards, to avoid a great mass of high mountains opposite Ujiji on the western shore; and then went Nor'west into the Manyuema or Cannibal Country. I was at a loss about the Lualaba, for it was reported to enter a third Lake, and on coming out it flowed West, no one knew whither. Its great size made me fear that it was the Congo. Here I found myself in the great bend it makes before turning North and N.N.East into, as I as yet only conjecture, the Nile. There can be little doubt that such is its destination, but I must go down and see. It is very large, and, were it not so very *Burtonesque*, I would call Tanganyika and it Lacustrine rivers—extant specimens of the Lake rivers which abounded in Africa in prehistoric times, and along which we often found our smoothest wagon-paths. The conviction has slowly crept over my mind that these two great Lake rivers are the two arms into which Ptolemy makes the head waters collect. As he places the sources correctly in Latitude, and gives as correct a view of their division into two head waters as could be expected from one copying oral information, his authorities, or probably the informers of his predecessors,

must have visited these very parts. In fact, all that we moderns can fairly claim is the *re-discovery* of what had sunk into oblivion, like the circumnavigation of Africa by the Phœnician Admiral of one of the Pharaohs about B.C. 600. He was not believed because he said that "in passing round Libya he had the sun on his right hand." This, to us who have passed round the Cape from East to West, stamps his tale as genuine. The position of Ptolemy's sources and his two head waters show equally reliable geography. The high watershed, though only 6,000 feet in altitude, must be his Mountains of the Moon, but why he called them Lunæ Montes I cannot divine. He did not believe in snow causing the inundations though later writers did, nor in the Etesian breezes, but all I recollect of the little I read of his geography, makes me speak with great hesitation. Kenia and Kilimanjaro though said to have snow, could not be meant—they are so very far off from the sources, and have no connection whatever with the Nile. The crescentic shape of the watershed could scarcely have given rise to the name, or Ptolemy would have given it that shape instead of making them—the mountains—like cocked hats. The ancients were pretty free with castles, elephants, gorgons, fishes, etc., but it was left for Arrowsmith to perch 200 miles of Lake on mountain-tops. A map of the Ethiopian gold mines of the time of Sethos II. is said by Dr. Birch, in the volume of the *Archæologia*, to be the very oldest in the world. Sesostris made maps and distributed them. I should like to see a specimen, for all the very old maps I have seen contain a good deal of Ptolemy's idea. He is by no means the first who gave African information. The ancient visitors to these parts were probably traders in ivory, gold, copper, slaves and tamed elephants. I found a tradition among the cannibals that their forefathers tamed and rode elephants. This is not of much worth except when contrasted with the total absence of the idea South of this. To those with whom I have spoken there, it seemed as

strange as riding on the moon would have been. A plant you mentioned as put on the hedges used in elephant capture and which is dreaded by the animal, is here unknown; I never asked you what it was, but suppose it to be a climbing plant. If I had been able to point it out and enquire its uses, I might have revived the tradition. Without it, no hedge would keep elephants in. It is on record that tamed elephants were brought to, I think, one of the Greek Commanders when out on a foray. He bought some and would have bought more, but the owners like wise men preferred to eat them. This has been quoted as conclusive evidence of incapacity for civilization. They preferred four or five tons of good fat meat to three or four brass pots—and so should I! Their wives made clay pots, and it was only Greek brass that could ask the animals which had cost the labour of several months of the people of a large district to capture, to be handed over for their worthless wares. I heard a Scotchman quote non-taming of elephants as proof of non-capacity for civilization, and we Scotch could never tame our Highlanders.

'I feel rather at a loss how to speak about poor Speke's discoveries. If I say nothing about them, I shall give offence. If I say that Ptolemy in his small Lake "Coloe" gives a more correct view of Victoria Nyanza than Speke and Grant, offence will still more be taken. He affords the best example I know of the eager pursuit of a foregone conclusion. When he discovered Okara or Victoria Nyanza, he at once concluded that herein were the sources of the Nile, and he would allow no one to question his conclusion. "20,000 square miles of water"!! He would not permit his own mind even to suspect a flaw, and he conjectured a "backwater" to eke out his little river when he saw that it would not account for the Nile. In V. Nyanza lay the sources and no mistake. Mr. Baker seems oddly enough to have upheld Speke's conclusion, though the sources are from 500 to 700 miles further up

the great Nile Valley than what were supposed to be the Fountains by Speke, Grant and Baker. No large river begins in a Lake, and this one seems to be enormously exaggerated in order to make the rise of the Nile therein feasible. If the Luabelé, who have lived for years East of Okara, be not greatly mistaken, three lakes have been run into one huge Victoria Nyanza. Okara has many large islands, and large spaces are covered with "Tikatika"—a mass of aquatic vegetation in which a grass, the Lotus and Duckweed are the chief ingredients. It can be walked over, and we were told of its existence at Gumadow. Were it not for the current which bears off miles and miles of *confervæ* and aquatic plants, Tanganyika would be largely covered too. I feel a little sorry for Speke's friends, but my regret is lessened by remembering that he went out of his way to say at a Geographical meeting that Portuguese crossed the continent before I did, and that Dr. Roscher discovered the North end of Nyassa before we did the South end. The two slaves on whose journey from Cassangé to Tette the Portuguese rest their claims went less by 600 miles than from sea to sea, and back again would have been other 600, or say 1,000 in all; and Roscher came near the middle, and as Col. Rigby's despatch incontestably proves, two months *after* we discovered the South end. The meeting had not this subject under discussion, but in this and other cases he thought that he was imitating the dashing style of Burton, but for whose evil teaching Speke would have exhibited the qualities of an English yeoman. Grant needs no pity. The sources led to his getting a good wife, £2,000 a year, and a London house with her, though he never saw them. I have to go down and see where the head waters join, then finish up by going round outside or South of all the sources, seeing if I can on the way the underground rock excavations and the copper mines of Katanga which have been worked for ages, and the Malachite is said to be inexhaustible. I don't like to leave my work so that

another may "cut me out" and say he has found sources South of mine. I am dreaming of finding the lost city of Meröe at the confluence of the two head branches. The reality reveals that I have lost nearly all my teeth—that is what the sources have done for me, and while I feel that all my friends will wish me to make a complete work of the Exploration, I am, at times, distressed in thinking of my family. A slate fell on Tom's head and injured his eyesight. I ought to have been at home to help him to a situation if he is recovered. I cease writing for the present with my kindest love to Mrs. Oswell and her young people.

'Affectionately yours,

'DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

'There are three lines of drainage. Ptolemy knew but two—the watershed is between 700 and 800 miles long from West to East. Four fountains rise from a mound on it, each not ten miles apart from the others. One I name after you by anticipation. It is the source of the Kafué. No water can flow up the bank on the South side of the watershed, so I give up going round. Two of the fountains mentioned flow North, two form Zambesi. These are probably the fountains of the Nile mentioned by the Secretary of Minerva in the City of Sais, to Herodotus, "from which half the water flowed North to Egypt, the other half to Inner Ethiopia." I hope to reach them long before this reaches you. (*See Dispatch.*)

'I have been greatly hindered by want of attendants. This is November. I long sorely to retire.

'D. L.'

'*Novr.* 24, 1870.

'I cut a leaf out of my Bombay cheque book to add a little to your letter. I am not quite sure that my packet of letters was destroyed, but it contained cheques for goods, and other men, and was sent in June, 1869, yet

nothing has come in reply. . . . If you have received a bird's-eye sketch of the sources having neither longitudes nor latitudes, and the Lakes relatively wrong towards each other, you will know that the packet has not been destroyed. I sent that . . . because it was my custom to give *you* the earliest possible information by means of imperfect sketches which I imagined would serve till my positions were correctly calculated at the Cape. I sent an imperfect sketch of Nyassa, the Shiré, etc., etc., with this understanding. . . . I am sorry to be in a manner compelled to speak disparagingly of my predecessors in exploration, but the discovery of the sources of the Nile was asserted so positively, and withal so honestly, that explanation is necessary in making a similar claim. . . . As soon as Speke and Grant looked to their Nyanza they turned their backs on the *Caput Nili*, which is 500 miles further up the great Nile valley than the most southerly point of Okara or Victoria Nyanza. When he saw that the little river that issues thence would not account for the Nile, instead of conjecturing a backwater, whatever that in nature may mean, he should have gone West into the trough of the valley, then, not to mention the lower Tanganyika, the upper part of which he had already participated in discovering, he must have come to Webb's Lualaba, not 80 or 90 yards broad as his pet *White Nile*, but never less than 2,000 yards, often from 4,000 to 8,000 yards; and then still further west another great Lacustrine river of equally enormous size—the two head waters of the river of Egypt.

'I sympathize with all real explorers and admire the splendid achievements of Speke, Grant and Baker. A Dutch lady-explorer, Miss Tinné, awakens my admiration greatly, though I never saw her. She had provided with such wise foresight for both land and water travel, and with her steamer proceeded so far and persevered so nobly in spite of the severest domestic affliction—the loss of her two aunts by fever—that had she not been, honestly enough of course, assured by Speke and Grant that they

had already discovered in Victoria Nyanza the sources she sought, she must inevitably, by boat or on land, have reached the head waters. I cannot conceive of a lady of so much pluck stopping short of Bangweolo. We great He-donkeys say exploration was not becoming her sex. Well, considering that at least 1,600 years have elapsed since the sources were formerly visited, and Emperors, Kings, Philosophers, all longed to know the fountains whence flowed the famous river, and longed in vain; exploration does not seem to have been very becoming the other sex either. She came further up than Nero, Cæsar's centurion. What honour has been bestowed on her?'

HILLSIDE.

*Journal, June* 15, 1871.—'After a pleasant dinner with the kind Whitelocks I drove up with the children to take possession of Hillside. A welcome from my husband in the porch, a hearty handshake with old Horsey—and then all set to work to make order out of chaos.'

It had been a point of honour with all Oswell's early friends to ask him to be godfather to one of their children, but it was with very special pleasure that he replied in the affirmative to the request contained in the following letter:

'KNELLWOOD, FARNBORO',
'*Aug.* 24, 1871.

'MY DEAR OSWELL,

'I am, as you know, a man of few words. Will you, as my oldest and best of friends, stand Godfather to a little chap who made his appearance three weeks ago?. . . Say yes to this and I will believe you have not forgotten your old friend Thos. Steele.'

He was warmly attached to Sir Thomas Steele. 'Tom Steele,' he writes, 'is one of the very few men I have known of whom I can say that I sincerely believe if we were not to meet for twenty years, we should pick one another up just where we left off, and be just as fond of one another. A simple, manly gentleman, if ever there was one, and as handsome as you like; one of the best boxers too I ever put on the gloves with, or saw, for that matter."

*Dr. Livingstone to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'TANGANYIKA,
'*Jany.* 6, 1872.

'. . . I will feel obliged if you will allow me to use your name on a fountain from which the Kafué is said to rise. You remember that Mokantju told us long ago that the Liambai or upper *Z*ambesi and the Kafué rose at one place, and separated. Kafué is called Luñga, Loenge (hard *g*) Kafujé and Kafué. It seems to be one of 4 fountains rising very near to each other, and I am presumptuous enough to think that these are the ancient fountains of Herodotus, of which we all read in boyhood and rejected as we became wise in natural philosophy. Mokantju was right and I have heard of the earthen mound at which the 4 fountains rise so often, and know pretty fairly the 4 rivers they form, that I venture to say I wait another year to *re*discover them. When we

heard Mokantju's tale, we were about 350 miles from the mound, but Liambai, whose fountain I call Palmerston's, and Kafué, whose fountain I call Oswell's, do most certainly flow into Inner Ethiopia. The other two, Bartle Frere's flows as R. Lufira into Lake Kamolout, and Young's (I have been obliged to knight him, to distinguish him from the gunner, as Sir Paraffin Young) goes through Lake Lincoln into Lualaba, and North to Egypt. They thus enter the central line of drainage, Webb's Lualaba into Petherick's branch. . . .

'I add a few lines more to thank you for your kind attentions to Oswell, who, I am glad to hear, has taken to the medical profession of his own accord. He must work his own way up. Sir Bartle Frere says he will do what he can for him if he goes to India, but I don't know enough of the medical profession there to direct him. I suspect he must go to America, for all advance in our country is through interest, and if I am removed he will have none.

'Did I dream that Baker had all *his* guns taken from him by "niggers" of whom he speaks so contemptuously? *I* could not pitch into even *slaves* without being certain of finding them all gone through the first night afterwards, but *he* thrashed them and the Arabs, "cussing and swearing promiskus," and they carried him meekly, while I have to tramp every step I go. . . . Sir Roderick, good man, . . . apportions the sources of the Nile to him who turned 600 miles short of them, and to Beke, Finlay and Arrowsmith, because they dreamed about them. He does not himself know the structure and economy of the watershed, or the way that this structure correlates the economy of the great Lakes and Lake rivers in the phenomena of the Nile. I am thinking of offering a prize of beefsteaks and stout for an explanation from Sir Roderick's pets before I divulge it all to you! I say the structure of the watershed is exactly what you and I found at Ntlotlé in the Kalahari. That and the enormous Lacustrine rivers and lakes, are the means which kind Providence arranged to regulate the

grand old Nile; *but this is for you and Mrs. O.* Willie must never say he *shot* an antelope at 600 yards with the weapons Baker used—*drop* is the word. He meant 600 *feet* surely; but I earnestly hope he will stop the Nile slave trade, and I shall forgive all his bosh of discovering sources.'

For some time past Benjamin Cotton had been suffering great pain in his blind eye. By the advice of his nephew and in company with him, he consulted a specialist, who insisted on its immediate removal. The old gentleman, who was then seventy-eight, cheerfully acquiesced in the decision, only stipulating that his "son" should be present at the operation. When the day fixed arrived, Oswell had fever on him, and the weather was bitter.

*To his Wife.*

'FOREST HOUSE, CHIGWELL,
'*Jany.* 7, 1872.

'I got all safe here an hour ago, and *warm*, thanks to someone's kind thought of putting in the caross. I think it was my little K.'s, but I am sure everyone would have done the same for me. God bless them. . . . I am all right again—my head has cleared, so don't be anxious about me.'

'*Jany.* 10.

'I am writing from Uncle Ben's room, the rest are gone to church. . . . The operation was a lengthy one—seven or eight minutes. Never saw anyone behave better — cool and wonderfully collected and unfussy. Don't know when I shall be back, but must stay till he is better as he requires constant watching night and day. John Rohde best of aids, very good fellow indeed. I kept watch till 4 a.m. and then he came, and now I'm on again; he in afternoon 3 p.m. Mind you telegraph to me if anything is wrong with yourself or children. God

bless you all. Love to the little ones. I thought much of you all last night. I don't like to think of your being alone, but I am only doing what you would wish.'

'*Jany.* 14.

'All going on well. If improvement continues I shall take a couple of days at home. . . . I must return here on Sunday night for at least another four or five days. The old man is very patient and good, does not appear the least *ill*, and eats and drinks like a Briton. . . . Give my love and kisses to the chicks. I groaned over the wind last night as I sat listening to it, thinking how it was frightening you—God bless you.'

*Journal, April* 10, 1872.—'F. cut his foot frightfully, late at night. William bound it up so admirably that the doctor when he came next day would not touch it.'

*Journal, May* 21, 1872.—'Delightful visit from Mr. Cooke, Professor Owen, Sir Antonio Brady, and Mr. Cole, Q.C., and his wife.'

Kindly, genial Professor Owen was an immense favourite with Mr. and Mrs. Oswell's children, partly no doubt on account of the eminently sensible views he held of their obligations. At luncheon one day he intercepted covert but earnest signals from them to their mother. 'What's the matter with the little people?' he inquired. 'I'm ashamed to say, Professor, they want to suck the bones of the fowl.' 'Well, and quite right too, but they ought not to have to ask leave. It's their *duty*, for the sake of their canine teeth; and they must eat cheese with their fingers too.' Truly 'a Daniel come to judgment!' thought the children.

Oswell spent August 14–20 at Brighton for the British Association, and made a special point of attending the reception of Stanley as a protest against his detractors and a mark of sympathy with him; for though, as will be seen

hereafter, he was no admirer of the man and his methods, he gave him full credit for what he was and had done, while his generous nature rebelled at the coldness and suspicion with which he was regarded by the English public.

'Stanley,' he writes, 'is really a very plucky fellow. No one ever takes into account that an African explorer, in the parts men are now working in, has always a hard time of it. It is a constant drag uphill against ever-recurring attacks of fever, ague, dysentery, and the weakness induced by them. With the thermometer at 100°, and surrounded by difficulty and discouragement of every kind, it takes a plucky fellow in first-rate trim to battle on. But now add sickness and weakness, and you want pluck plus something.'

At the beginning of 1873 Oswell read the Lessons in church, and thenceforward continued to do so for seventeen or eighteen years. On the first occasion the fine old clerk who had listened critically to decide whether or no he could conscientiously give the new departure his official sanction, stumped up after service, and patting the reader on the shoulder, exclaimed: 'You quitted yourself uncommon well, you did.' It would be impossible to overstate the beauty, the reverence and the power of Oswell's voice and manner. 'Doesn't he preach *splendidly!*' whispered a child once. 'He do read de Baible so staalish' (stylishly), said a dull-witted old labourer, 'that nobody carn't be off unnerstondin' of 'im.'

It is indicative of his thoroughness and humility that during the whole time he read the Lessons he never failed to go through them carefully morning and afternoon before starting for church, generally with a Commentary.

*Journal, October* 17, 1873. — 'A telegram summoned William to London; he had fever, alas! but went of

course—to find that our dear brother-in-law John Lees had died awfully suddenly in the underground railway. William spent the whole day in trying to save Nelly the pain of an inquest. A conscientious coroner's officer and zealous railway officials made this difficult, but the certificate of a doctor who had attended John, weighed with the former, and golden arguments convinced the latter. William stayed two or three days and made all necessary arrangements for the funeral, etc.'

Sir John Lees, though naturally silent and reserved, was from the moment of their first meeting in the Bahamas, fifteen years before, perfectly easy, frank and open with his brother-in-law. They had both seen, travelled and thought much, and heartily liked and respected each other.

'Say to John Lees,' wrote Oswell to his future wife soon after his visit to Nassau, 'all that is kind for me, please, thanking him most truly for all the kindness and openness of his conduct to me. May he always be what I am proud to believe he now is—my friend.'

'Give my warmest regards to Oswell,' wrote Sir John, many years afterwards, to Mrs. Oswell; 'I know no fellow in the world whom I like better. May God bless you and him.'

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1873–1878. AGE 55–60.

Keen interest in work and play of his sons at school—Love of classics—Death of 'Everybody's uncle'; his personality and home — Identification of Livingstone's body; his funeral — An estimate of his motives and character — Oswell's love of geology—Harris's 'Africa'; 'where he left off shooting, I began'—Refusal to edit Livingstone's 'Last Journals'—'I was put into Pindar and Theocritus when I was twelve'—Weston the walker—The moral and physical uses of boxing—An awful example—Invites and promises openness—Worse troubles from curiosity and ignorance than from knowledge—'Are you Handsome Oswell?'—Admiral Englefield's chest, biceps, and calves —Never use cribs—Verses a mistake—Thanks for good reports—'Don't work too hard'—Minnie—Cheeky to the French master—Visit to Haileybury—Tone of a school safeguard of boys—Kaleidoscopic education—Lister and carbolic spray—Physics better than physic—Death of Francis Rivaz—An extract from his diary—Sir George Nares; 'boy or girl?'—Prizes rewards of spurts—Gain at school *habit* of working and doing—Lord Stratford de Redcliffe; 'a most extraordinary old man.'

FOR the next thirteen or fourteen years William Oswell is, it is thought, best seen in his letters to his sons, and these have accordingly been largely drawn on. Throughout the whole period of their education he wrote to them constantly, advising, explaining, encouraging, sympathizing.

Vividly recollecting his own school-days, he was able to divine with astonishing accuracy their individual needs, temptations, troubles, difficulties and pleasures.

With their play, and every department of their work, save mathematics, he was from the very beginning in close touch, and his interest never flagged. He invariably went through all their examination papers carefully, and if, as was rarely the case, any question was sufficiently difficult to puzzle him, worked it out. Each good report or remove received its unfailing meed of cordial thanks, balanced by an urgent petition against overwork. He was always at his boys' service in the holidays if they wished for help in their lessons, and especially delighted in developing the strong inclination for classical study which they inherited from him, and which increased in him with years. At night, as he sat smoking in the kitchen after the household had gone to bed, he used very frequently to occupy himself in reading Latin and Greek and writing prose and verse in both languages, scribbling on the backs of envelopes, the edges of the newspaper, the inside of any book that was handy, or even on a slate. Putting into elegiacs twenty-seven lines of 'The Lady of the Lake,' beginning at 'The stag at eve had drunk his fill,' was the amusement of an evening only a few days before his death. His singular felicity in rendering the spirit of one language into another enabled him to appreciate critically the graceful scholarship of 'Arundines Cami' and 'Sabrinæ Corolla,' while he was sufficiently catholic in his taste to admire the very modern dress in which Jeans clothed his 'Selected Letters of Cicero,' and the originality and ingenuity of his idea of substituting French equivalents for the Greek words and expressions in the text.

*To his Sons.*

'St. Leonards,
'*Novr.*, 1873.

'My dear Boys,

'I did not know how much I loved you until you went away from me, and ever since I have done nothing but think of you and all your little trials and troubles, possible and impossible. God help and keep you, my darlings, and He will if you try to do that which is right and ask Him for His aid. . . . Though your Mother and I have been longing to see you, we have thought it better not to disturb you too soon, but to let you settle down a bit. I have had little peeps of you nevertheless when you did not know, and saw you yesterday coming from the football field. F., my poor little fellow, I should like to have given you a hug, but would not. . . . We will have a long talk about no end of things when we meet. . . . You will always find different sorts of boys at school. Stick to the best and try to bring the others to your way of thinking by kind firmness in declining to do that you know to be wrong, and always doing, without any wavering, what you know to be right. God bless you, my boys. . . . Our very most affectionate love to you both.'

Towards the end of December a telegram summoned him to the bedside of Benjamin Cotton:

*To his Wife.*

'Chigwell,
'*Dec.*, 1873.

'Uncle Ben is, I fear, very seriously ill, and until he improves I cannot but think my duty ought to keep me here, much as I long to be with, and take care of you. My child, do not add to my trouble by neglecting yourself. Have fires everywhere, and take all precautionary means. If the stove burns low, tell Horsey to make it

up, and let someone poke it and put coals on it the last thing at night. . . . I shall sit up to-night and give Thomas a night in, and to-morrow I think we must have a nurse, for night and day work is too much for anyone; I speak of Thomas, I myself have done nothing at all. God bless you all. . . .'

*To his Wife.*

'*Jany.* 1, 1874.

'Uncle Ben passed away this morning. I was with him. . . . He had insisted at 12 o'clock on being placed in a chair, and I had taken him out of bed as I could not have kept him in, except by force. He sat there for about half-an-hour and then said he would return to bed. Thomas and I lifted him in, he lay down quite quietly, and gradually breathed his life away without the slightest struggle. . . . I shall not return till after the funeral unless you want me, as we have plenty to do here, but if you are ill I will of course come *at once*.'

The death of his uncle was a heavy blow to him. From his earliest childhood he had known no other father, and there had always existed between them the truest affection and the most entire comprehension and confidence. There had been no break in their steady correspondence, while every year, in addition to numerous flying visits, he with his wife, children and two servants, spent five or six weeks of the summer at Chigwell. Mr. Cotton was very deaf, but he never missed a word spoken in the powerful voice of his nephew. To the children their conversations appeared incredibly dull. Accustomed as they were to hear their father talk of most interesting subjects in a most interesting manner, they could not conceive it possible that anyone really cared for the ins and outs of the family genealogy, and the doings, misdoings, births, marriages and deaths of the different members.

In person Mr. Cotton was very tall, upright and stout; he was always carefully dressed, and wore a real beaver hat, black in winter, white in summer. In his younger days he had been a good cricketer and rider and a capital whip. Notwithstanding his deafness, he was most genial and hospitable, and enjoyed entertaining and seeing his friends. During the long summer sojourn the carriage took him daily with his nephew and niece and several of 'the little uns, the more the merrier,' for a round of calls, many at a great distance; and very hearty everywhere was the welcome accorded to the fine, courteous old gentleman and his companions.

BENJAMIN COTTON.

To nine people out of ten he was 'Uncle Ben.' 'I used,' said his nephew, speaking at a wedding-breakfast given at Forest House, 'to wonder why Mr. Cotton never married, but I came to the conclusion long ago it is because he is everybody's uncle.'

He was a sober, old-fashioned Churchman, and it was wonderfully impressive to hear him read prayers in his own house, or to see him following in his big Prayer Book every word of the service in church, most reverently thundering out the responses, and the alternate verses of the Psalms, rolling his *r*'s, rounding his *o*'s, and broadening his *a*'s as 'the life of the worrrld to comm'; 'Ouorr Fathorr;' 'Lorrd, thou haast been;' 'For evorr and evorr.' Now and then he dropped behind the congregation, but the clergyman always respectfully waited. On one occasion a stranger with a rapid delivery took the duty, and, ignorant of the traditions of the church, kept on reading *through* him. Sorely puzzled, the old gentleman made several attempts to get into line, but at length abandoned

the unequal struggle with a forcible 'Damn the fellow!' He had no idea he had given audible expression to his thoughts, and when after service he was told he had done so, he hastened to make a humble apology, which was readily accepted.

Forest House was a paradise for children, and the faithful, trusted butler and housekeeper, Thomas and Susan Broadbridge, largely helped to make it so. The latter had been in the service of the family for more than forty years, and remembered Oswell a dashing boy and his mother a beautiful young woman. Their stock of amusements was inexhaustible. When there was no churning going on, there were stories; when the mangle or knife-machine did not need turning or locks oiling, there was always guava jelly. If the cats or fowls could eat no more, was there not the plate to clean, bread and milk to be made for the hedgehogs, honey to be purveyed to invalid bees, dough and wool to be mixed for bait? Every day, too, dessert had to be put out, to reappear later under circumstances of peculiar solemnity, only relieved by the sad, clear notes extorted from finger-glasses by moist little hands; when, after the preliminary scuffle outside to arrange precedence, the great oak door of the dining-room was opened and the flock filed in, and with awful joy slipped into the seats set for them round the brilliantly-polished table, which reflected their serious, foreshortened faces like a mirror.

Then out of doors there were the exquisitely-kept stables; particularly grateful pigs; old Crawley, ready to milk the cows into the five mugs; the immense conservatory, *the* place to spend a happy, rainy day; the long, wide, iron veranda, which clanged delightfully when one ran up and down on it; the profusion of jessamine to thread on the fine shavings from the study fireplace; the hot-houses and walled gardens, with their Commander-in-chief on the lookout for young people obligingly willing to thin his grapes and peaches; the round pond of man's device, con-

taining more frogs than water; the orange-trees in pots; the oleanders; the great beds of verbena and musk; the seats that opened and shut exactly like a piano; the summer-house; the lion's-tongue holly; the railings, with drops of tar collected under each bar, just sufficiently skinned over to make pinching them between finger and thumb a fascinating pastime, than which the subsequent sanding and buttering was only one degree less agreeable; the pump in the shrubbery, with its interesting mechanism exposed, its plentifully-greased piston-rod working up and down in the centre of a sort of cup into which it squeezed every time a few drops of water, thus affording, at the trifling cost of a face smeared and blackened, a romantic drinking-fountain, the contents of which were the more satisfying from their strong flavour of iron and oil.

And to crown all, within easy reach were handsome Mrs. Noad and her large family of charming, spirited children, with their punt, their bower in a tree, their horse Black Prince.

*Journal, February* 6, 1874.—'Our boys at school had measles. Their father went to see them and the fifteen other invalids, taking with him a box of two hundred oranges to regale the hospital.'

*March* 16.—'K. ill. William moved her little bed into the dressing-room and watched by her all night.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Second Son.*

'Groombridge,
'*April*, 1874.

'Poor Dr. Livingstone's body is coming home, and is, I believe, to be buried in Westminster Abbey. I went to see Agnes Livingstone the other day. She is terribly cut up, poor girl, and so was I too, dear. He had so nearly done his work, but not quite. But still I know it was all for the best.'

*Journal, April* 15, 1874.—'William went to London to identify the body of Dr. Livingstone. He had been profoundly grieved and silent, doubting whether he should be able to recognise his old friend, but not only was the broken arm unmistakable, but the features were unchanged. He brought home a lock of the hair, dark-brown still, scarcely tinged with gray.'

*April* 18.—'Warm as summer. William and I set off by the early train for Livingstone's funeral. He went straight to the Geographical Society. Lady Augusta Stanley had sent a message begging me to go to the Deanery that she might give me a good place. She took me first to the Leads, to see such a sight as I shall never forget, the sea of heads and the long train of carriages, filling Broad Sanctuary, representing every grade of life, from the Queen to the humblest crossing-sweeper. The concentrated, *cumulated* feeling was, as it always is, deeply moving. And then that wonderful Abbey thronged with earnest men and women dressed in mourning. We sat, or rather stood, in the curious little Deanery pew over the Jerusalem Chamber, and looked down on the black carpet laid for the procession, with one white line for the coffin in the centre of the nave. Very soon the words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," sounded in the distance, taken up in lovely cadences by the white-robed Choir. Then came the coffin covered with a pall upon which exquisite white flowers were heaped. There were eight pall-bearers, my husband and his friend, General Steele, at the head, Stanley and Jacob Wainright at the feet. Slowly and solemnly the procession wound its way along the black road until hidden by the Choir gates. Back at last to gather round Livingstone's last resting-place—his *first*, as Canon Conway touchingly said in his sermon next day. The Dean read magnificently. We all—the whole vast assembly—joined in the single hymn, "O God of Bethel," and the Choir sang "His body shall rest in peace, but his name liveth

for evermore." The poor Livingstone family, my husband and all the mourners, who entered the building in heart-broken sorrow, left it with a quiet look of comfort and satisfaction. Before the funeral he had talked much to me of the mystery of the man's broken purpose and of the sadness of his last letters, in which he speaks of being "forgotten and alone." After it, he told me that it was all clear to him, his death would help the cause he had so utterly at heart—the extinction of the curse of slavery—more than his life could have ever done.'

By that evening's post Oswell wrote to Canon Conway:

'When I saw you on Tuesday you did me the honour to ask several questions touching the motives which actuated my dear old friend Livingstone, and the peculiarities of character which enabled him to do so much in Africa. With regard to the first, I mentioned that an earnest purpose to give light to those who sat in darkness, personally, and to smooth the way for those who came after him as the bearers of the same glad tidings, was knit in later years to the fervent hope that he might aid in striking off the fetters from the limbs, as well as from the souls, of Africa's sons and daughters. But I think I hardly spoke strongly enough of his wonderful aptitude for the work he undertook. He was pre-eminently a *Man*—patient, all-enduring under hardships, content to win his way by inches, but never swerving from it; gentle, kindly, brotherly, to the children of the land; absolutely unruffled amidst danger and difficulty, and well satisfied to see but the one step in advance. If ever man carried out the Scriptural injunction to take no thought for the morrow, that man was David Livingstone. Such is the estimate I have formed of his character. You may not think it worth much, and you may be better informed, but I hear you are to preach a funeral sermon to-morrow, and it is just possible you may be willing, in the absence of better

authority, to receive and think over the words of one who believes he is telling the truth.

'I am, with much respect,

'Yours very truly.'

*To his Elder Sons.*

'*May* 26, 1874.

'. . . I am very much pleased that you have found friends who take interest in such a study as geology. I send you by post Page's first book on that subject. I hardly expect you to read it through, but perhaps you may like to dip into it now, and may some day find it not too dull to read. The more you understand of it the more interest you will take in it. Nothing save astronomy is, to my mind, to be compared with it, and this perhaps to those who can understand it thoroughly, of whom I am certainly not one, may be the grander ; but geology always fills me with wonder, and increases most wonderfully my appreciation of the infinity of God's work and of the ageless eternity of the Creator. . . . If there should be any other book that you would like, it can be sent to you. . . . I should think some of the boys would be interested in Gordon Cumming's, and Harris's. The latter you have not, but I will willingly get it for you ; it was from reading it that I was first induced to go to Africa (I hope it may not have the same effect on you) and it is, as I think, by far the best account of African travels written. He went to Africa long before my time, and indeed was the first. He did not go in very far, but in those days all the big game was close at hand ; now, it is far, far away. Where he left off shooting I began.

'Most lovingly,

'Your affectionate Father.'

In the extraordinary number of subjects in which he took interest, or of which he was master, geology probably held the foremost place.

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*July* 6, 1874.

'Now just go along straight till the 31st, learning your lessons and doing your duty to God and man. Keep out of all scrapes if you can, and should you tumble in, shirk nothing; get out honestly and manfully without regard of consequences. I will try and get you a level piece of ground for cricket when you come home. Bring your bats. You will find a ball all ready. Is it these holidays you are to have a gun? I do not quite remember, but wish to keep my promise, so tell me. The pony will, I think, be in the stables in a fortnight. . . . The house is at last tidy again *until* you come home, but what we are to do with all the Chigwell furniture I don't know. Mr. Horsey expressed his great satisfaction with the drawing-room the other day: "Why, sir, it is beautiful; I don't think you could get another thing in!"'

*Miss Agnes Livingstone to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'Arrochar House,
'Arrochar, N.B.,
'*July* 6, 1874.

'. . . I am going to ask you a very great favour, and if you grant it I shall be for ever most grateful to you. I appeal to you as my Father's old and valued friend to help us, if it is not asking too much of you. In plain words will you undertake the task of editing the "Journal"? Your intimate knowledge of Papa, and your having assisted him with his last books, make me feel that you are *the* one of all others capable of doing it, and the relief to my mind would be greater than I can express. I feel convinced that Papa wrote out the larger "Journal" fairly, almost in the words in which he would have given it over for publication, and that there would be very few altera-

tions required. . . . I know Mr. Webb is going to write to you on the subject too. Susi and Chuma being in England would be of great use to you in helping with any difficulty in the "Journal," as they have wonderful memories and are most intelligent. . . . Dr. Kirk can get a narrative from them about the last days, as he can speak their language. They speak English too. . . . I trust sincerely that we have not asked too much, and that you will be able to help us out of this difficulty, as I am so afraid my dearest Father's work will be lost, as it ought to be out in November. . . . With best love,

'Believe me,

'Yours very affectionately.'

Though naturally much touched by this proof of the confidence of the children of his old friend, after careful consideration he thought it right to decline the undertaking on the grounds of his inability to do justice to it, of the health of his wife, which rendered a winter abroad a probability, and of the expressed view of the publishers that Mr. Waller was the most competent and suitable person for the task.

A few months later he writes to Miss Livingstone:

'My dear Agnes,

'I have received through Mr. Murray two volumes "from the children" of my old and dear friend, and I would thank them most heartily through you for their affectionate remembrance of me. I have begun to read the book, and the short, curt sentences, full of pith, bring the dear old Father so vividly before me that I cannot believe I am never to see him again. The dear old fellow, how quiet and gentle he has grown in these his last journals. I do not mean that he was ever the contrary, but though his unflinching courage and determination remain where they ever were, his gentleness seems to have become even more

and more diffused through all he did; he is not only *suaviter in modo* but *in re* too. I have always said when asked, that the most remarkable trait in him was *quiet*, unostentatious endurance. I speak of course of his character as a *Man par excellence*. Thank you, dear, for sending me the last records of his work here. I was afraid you were hurt a little at my not undertaking the great honour of compiling his letters and notes, but I was not fit for it, and in the face of what Mr. Murray said it would have been impertinence to put myself forward. Now that all has been done so much better than I could have done it, and your heart is soft, you will forgive me . . .

'Believe me,

'Very affectionately yours.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*March* 2, 1875.

'I will do all I can to help you on with your lessons during the holidays, but as these are short, you had better select one or two subjects in which you are most backward, for working up. Though, my dear fellow, I should be *delighted* to know that you were thoroughly fit for a move up, I do not desire it until you are; for as a rule there is nothing so repressive and disheartening as to be *always* a little behind those you are working with. An everlasting toiling in the rear is poor work, and losing work too, for from the subjects and books being in advance of you, you receive all explanations only very hazily, and in the meantime partly forget what you have already learnt; and so weaken your ladder at the bottom, and keep on leaving out steps as you are *pulled* up it! I know all this from experience. I was put into Pindar and Theocritus when I was twelve, and at eighteen was a fool so far as all critical knowledge of the humanities was concerned, and have remained so since. . . .'

*To his Second Son.*

'*March*, 1875.

'Light will come, if you *keep on* looking for it, into the most awful sum in fractions or even into those horrible little Greek fables (explained) you read. I hardly think perhaps it will ever shine *very* clearly into these last; for between ourselves I do think them very stupid affairs. Now, W.'s book *Sertum* is very good; but with regard to those fables, the epitaph over the naughty young lady's grave in Richmond churchyard would apply—"the less said about them the better"! Never, so long as you do your best, be sorry or ashamed at being behind others; people, like trees, don't all sprout at the same time, and those that sprout last are often much more valuable than the early ones. One thing is certain, the older you grow the less you will think you know, if you know aright.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*March*, 1876.

'. . . I went to see Weston the walker at the Agricultural Hall, and am very sorry I did so. The sad feeling that the plucky fellow *must* lose his match, made and makes me very sorrowful. I wish he had only undertaken to walk four hundred miles in five days; this he could have done, but with all his pluck I do not think it is possible that he could have done the five hundred in the six. I saw him late in the afternoon of the fifth day when he had walked about three hundred and seventy miles, and I cannot bear to think the cheerful, gallant chap will be beaten after all. I am right sorry for him, for the indomitable pluck of the man is amazing. He is a thin, slight, rather wizened American with a bald patch on the top of his head, apparently forty years old or more; but he may have looked older, from his work, than he really is. He was walking in thick shooting-boots, very square toed, leather gaiters and

black velveteen breeches or trousers; with a belt round his waist and a white slop jacket. He carried a whip with a little blue flag, stepped wonderfully cleanly, with long strides and with a great deal of action of the arms and shoulders; and though he had been at it for five nights and days, I was obliged to walk *as hard as I could* to keep up with him for the length of the hall. He really is an extraordinary man. Poor fellow! I would have given £50 to have him win. He was when I saw him fifty-two miles ahead of the Englishman, to whom he had given one hundred and fifty-eight miles start!! . . . Of course learn boxing. I should like you also to go in for fencing and singlestick if it would not take up too much of your time. Consider of this yourselves. . . . Remember one thing in boxing especially, that the great object is to *keep your temper*—this is its *moral* use; to keep your *head*, its *physical;* and no one ever yet boxed well who was not cool and collected. The gloves are rather hard, but will not bruise.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*Ap.*, 1876.

'. . . I have lately come out quite in a new line, a kind of public upholder of thrift in all its branches—Savings Banks, Penny Banks, etc. Your Mother thinks I am out of my element, but as I merely offer myself as an *awful* example, doing duty as the drunken helot to the old Spartans, why I hope there's not much harm done. Besides, I don't *say* anything, but *look* a good deal, and read "Little Toddlekins," or some other highly economical essay. . . . I shall not trouble you with any classics. I dare say you are nearly beyond me now; but we will try to gain just a trifle of general information and physical science together. Do you want any money for tips or anything? If so, say so, and you shall want it no longer.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Sept.* 22, 1876.

'. . . Always write openly and freely to me and tell me if there should be anything I can help you in by counsel or explanation, and I will always answer you in the same way and give you any assistance that may lie in my power. If either you or F. should require more money during the term, write and ask for it. I want you to feel that there is no difference between you and other boys, for I know it is an unpleasant thing to be picked out as not doing something that others do. . . . As you have access to your dormitories I trust both you and F. will change your boots and socks if wet. . . . Do you want chests of drawers or anything for your rooms?'

His sons availed themselves to the full of the offer made in the first lines of this letter, and he never shrank from his undertaking. 'On the whole,' he used to say in later years, 'my experience has been that boys at school get into worse troubles from curiosity and ignorance than they ever do from knowledge; but each case should be decided on its merits, and every father must form his own conclusion as to each of his sons separately, whether and when it is necessary or advisable to speak or to wait to be asked.'

*Journal, September* 30, 1876.—'Dined at the Cookes' to meet Admiral Englefield and his wife. A Mr. Bigge took me in to dinner. It turned out that he was a Rugby schoolfellow of William's, and he set the table laughing by calling across, "Are you 'Handsome Oswell'?"—a nickname we had not heard for forty years.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Oct.* 7, 1876.

'Admiral Englefield, the great Arctic man, was calling here the other day. He is just the fellow for W. to admire

—large chest, large biceps, big calves!—a very fine, *strong*-looking man all over.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*Oct.* 14, 1876.

'Did you ask your form-master if you might use that "Arnold's Homer"? If you have not done so I hope you will at once, for though I think he would not object, he might do so in the interest of the other boys, as the notes are a help, no doubt. If he *does*, send it back at once.

'I trust neither of my lads will ever make use of cabs or cribs or whatever English translations of Greek and Latin authors may be called at Haileybury, but that they will rather keep at the very bottom of their classes for ten years. In a year or two I suppose you will have a study, though whether this is a *desideratum* or not seems doubtful to me. But it would be great fun furnishing it. I remember my satisfaction in doing that business at Rugby. . . . I don't take much to P. He seems to think us all rather small potatoes, and that in coming to Groombridge he has thrown himself away, and this kind of party is not to my mind. I thought of you both this morning when I woke, and of the grammar papers. I trust you may both do well in them. Without this knowledge no so-called scholar can be anything but an impostor. It was here I failed. Grammar was not systematically taught in my time; we were supposed to pick it and English up anyhow, or to be born thoroughly imbued with them, and I was idle, very idle, and am now sorry, very sorry.

'It was easy enough for a sharpish boy to be a flashy construer and to be able to write vapid verses which scanned. These Latin and Greek verses *were* a mistake, and I suppose *are*. Ten lines of good prose are worth a hundred of verses half stolen, half pleonasms'

'*Nov.*, 1876.

'We yesterday received your half-quarterly reports, and would most heartily thank you both for the very excellent accounts they give of you. We are requested not to forward them to Haileybury, but are recommended to give extracts from them for your benefit, etc. But, my dear lads, we cannot do this, for they are unbroken chains of pleasant, cheering comments, without one single drawback. Everything that father or mother could wish, "*good*" all through each; no higher term is in use in the printed formulas. They are simply all one could desire and are footed by Mr. B. with the remark that you both have made a very good start. Again thank you, my heart is white! I only beg you now not to work too hard, which I am rather afraid you may be doing, for I see little F. is twice first in his class, and the average age of his classfellows is 15·2! and that you, W., notwithstanding your mid-term remove, have run up to 9th in your new form. Take it steady, you'll both be in the VI. by the time you are 18, and I would not have you lose your health for all the wisdom of Solomon, the Greek of Porson, or the Latin of Bentley.'

In 1877 his youngest son went to school:

'No Egyptian cat,' writes his father to him, 'was ever made such an idol of as Minnie. The liberties she takes put me in mind of Airy Fairy Lilian's. Now that you are away everyone thinks her lovely, and even her "waist" is not considered too thick. I am afraid she can hardly last till you come home; her skin is getting so tight it *must* burst. This is her front view!

'Oh, look into this face of mine,
And take me for your Valentine.
I own that you have had to wait,
And my fond vows are somewhat late;

But oh! believe I purred my loudest,
And that my tail was swelled its proudest.
I growled at Pixie, swore at Fluff;
I showed my wishes plain enough,
That the fair artist would not tarry,
But sketch me promptly for my Harry.
Surely the fault is hers, not mine,
So late appears your Valentine.'

I shall come down some time in the middle of the term and pay you a visit, and get you to come out with me, but this term is such a short one that I think we had much better not have you home before Easter; it unsettles you, my dear little chap, the first term. . . . Our dear love to you, my little son.'

Minnie was a fat, fierce cat of no value to anyone save the owner, who, however, was devoted to her. In every letter to him, therefore, his father made a point of giving bulletins of her.

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*Feb.*, 1877.

'When does the Examination for the Scholarship begin? Will there be any possibility of bringing home the papers set? You know I have always great pleasure in looking at papers you have had to answer. It seems to keep me *au courant* with your advance in work, so never neglect giving us a sight of them when you can do so with convenience. . . . I am sorry —— is so unsettled, and living such a purposeless life. Beginning life in a slatternly way makes a man at the end of it as useless as,

'Yours very affectionately.

'P.S.—I am reading a book on Egypt by a man of the name of Zincke, which I think might interest you. If you have it in your Library I advise you to look at it.

Its title is merely "Egypt," by Barham Zincke. It puts in a readable form the wonders of old Egypt, though from some of the conclusions one might perhaps differ. There are two long letters in the *Telegraph* from Stanley, who has been finding out a new source for the Nile, or at all events another of its many feeders.'

*To his Youngest Son.*

'*Feb.* 22, 1877.

'. . . I hope you will never be "old boy enough to be cheeky to the French Master." Remember he is probably a gentleman as much as you are, and if not, that makes no difference; he is an honest man working for his living, and trying to teach you, and a foreigner into the bargain, to whom more especially courtesy is due. Think how sadly annoyed you would be if you were a man and in France, teaching English, and the boys jeered at you. I'm sure my H. never will laugh or give any improper answer or in any way act uncourteously, for it is very unmanly to do so, and if you are anything you are a very manly little boy; and besides all this it is very wrong. I've no fear of you, my lad, not I. Leave laughing and "cheeking" to stupid, snivelling little creatures who can do nothing else.'

*To his Eldest Daughter.*

'*April*, 1877.

'Little Sir M. W. called on us yesterday—no end of a little important fellow, but he is very kind, I am told, to the poor, and a very good little man in all ways, though out of a small body large words do come now and then. And perhaps it is all natural. I think I should very likely talk in the same way if I came into £20,000 a year. of which I see no chance as yet.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*June* 20, 1877.

'. . . Just tell me quite truly whether you would *rather* I should come down to the speeches on the 27th or *not.* Ask F. and be quite sincere. . . . I know without your telling me that boys do not always like their schoolfellows to see their parents—not that they are ashamed of them themselves, but that they partly fear the other boys should think them queer-looking people. So make your choice—I shall not be hurt if you say perhaps I had better not come, and shall quite understand your feeling, for haven't I been a boy myself!'

*Journal, June* 27, 1877. — 'William and I paid a charming visit to our boys at Haileybury. Consecration of the new Chapel by Bishop Claughton. Excellent speeches—the best by far Montague Butler's. In referring to the change made by Mr. Bradby from the old four-square to the new domed building, he most aptly quoted *Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis.*'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Eldest Son.*

'*June* 29, 1877.

'. . . Your Mother and I thought you both looked poorly and thin, but I have tried to persuade her it was only the kind of excitement of seeing her and eating nothing. There is always in meetings like that of Wednesday, an unsatisfied feeling that the result has not come up to the expectation, but that, from the nature of things, must be. Parents and children are looking forward to a few hours together, and they find that a hundred and one interruptions prevent their doing what they would. But

we were very glad to see you and hope you were to see us.'

Entirely in sympathy with the views held by Arnold as to the training of boys, and believing they were now practically universally accepted as sound, it was a great surprise to him to find a Headmaster—himself a Rugbeian of later date—still advocating constant supervision and even espionage. In the course of a correspondence with him he writes:

'. . . There are many things you know *because* you are Headmaster, and from all I have ever heard a very efficient one, but there are things that never reach you, for the same reason. Think of our own school life, how seldom one link in the chain was got hold of. There is a very strong freemasonry amongst boys, and some secrets are well kept, though no doubt, accidentally or otherwise, occasionally found out. After all, the *tone* of the school is the safeguard of the boys, not the power of repression of the masters; they may help the better element to get to the surface, and so mend matters, but the radical work must be done by the boys themselves. I was at Rugby from the beginning of 1833 to the end of 1835. Drinking was the vice of the school. Arnold, I believe, suspected it, but he never gained sufficient knowledge to act on. . . . I fancy our duty is to guard against the evil we *see*, or think we see, immediately before us, and trust that light may be given for future guidance.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Second Son.*

'*Oct.* 23, 1877.

'No two men teach in the same way, or lay stress upon exactly the same things, but this is all good for you if you attend closely, for the world is many-sided, and it is as well

you should see as many of the sides of teaching as may be consistent with your going ahead, for education is, after all, a very mixed and heterogeneous affair; you pick up a little from one, and a little from another, and all goes to make patterns in the kaleidoscope.

'Cousin Robert is very poorly; he tells me he makes two holes in his saddle where he sits! Don't I remember my two little wells in Africa!

'I hope you both will turn your thoughts to your future, as I should like to help you on in the direction you decide upon going.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'8, The Lawn,
'St. Leonards-on-Sea,
'*Nov.* 21, 1877.

'. . . I have been a good deal in request of late among sick folk, especially in Cowley Street, whither I have been twice within the fortnight for two or three days because your Aunts were anxious about your grandfather and wished me to be present when a new surgeon was called in in consultation. This was the great Scotchman Joseph Lister, whose signature I enclose as I think you collect such things. He has been summoned from Edinburgh by acclamation to take the post of Head Surgeon and Operator of King's College Hospital in place of the late Sir W. Fergusson. He is a remarkable man in many ways, but especially great in puzzling the bacteria by performing operations under the carbolic spray with cloths, knives, bandages all soaked in the same sweet-smelling liquid, so that he practically does away with pyæmia (blood poisoning by pus) which has hitherto been the bane and terror of all great operators. Pyæmia once set up in an amputation ward spreads like wildfire among all the patients, by the diffusion of these living entities bacteria. Well there you are, and here is his signature.

He is a very pleasant, gentlemanly man, quiet and grave, looks about fifty-six. . . .'

*To his Elder Daughter.*

'19, Cowley Street,
'*Dec.* 11, 1877.

'. . . I am very sorry indeed to hear about Mr. Horsey, . . . when it is fine go and see him. Give him and Miss C. anything they want so far as you can, and indeed do so to all sick folk. If there is any demand for port wine you had better open a bottle of the best, rather than they should need. Only, decant it with the wine-strainer and give about a quarter of a bottle at a time. Let cook make what they want. I am very glad you take to physics. They are after all better than physic! Poor grandpapa is getting weaker, I think, day by day. I cannot say I hope he will be kept here much longer, for his life is a weariness to him, but God knows best. God bless and keep you, my dears.'

*Journal, December* 11, 1877. — 'Throughout the long night, at intervals, William prayed aloud, extempore and from the office for the dying, by my dear father's bedside. In the early morning the quiet breathing ceased, and then turning to my sisters and me he said so tenderly, "My dears, his pain is all over now." Papa had always trusted he might have his eyes closed by his best-beloved son-in-law, and the wish was granted.'

For twenty-one years—from the day of their first meeting to that of their parting by death, the smallest cloud had never come between them; their intercourse had been one unbroken chain of hearty affection and respect. The house of each stood always wide open to the other, and the warmest welcome was always ready. No alterations at Hillside were officially regarded as improvements until

'grandpapa' had seen and pronounced on them, and his pronouncement was invariably approval.

After his death the following entry was found in his private journal:

'On re-reading this little book I have been somewhat startled at perceiving no mention of or allusion to the most signal and precious of all God's mercies to me and mine, in that priceless family blessing of my dear Daughter Agnes's Husband; nor can I account for the omission of such a record from any other cause than that of utter inability to express my own and children's appreciation of the rare excellence, disinterested generosity and fraternal love and affection which all have delighted to recognise in the noble character of that most admirable and accomplished Individual.'

*Journal, December* 20, 1877–*February* 10, 1878.—'Three of our children have been very ill. William helped night and day with the nursing, cheering and supporting each member of the household, and when the invalids were better he read to, amused and occupied them as no one else in the world could do.'

*Journal, March* 1, 1878.—'Awful news of my dear brother-in-law Edward Lewin having been upset in a carriage and fearfully injured. A telegram came urging my husband to go to him. He had a bad attack of fever on him, but went, of course. He came home on the 3rd, and in reply to my eager enquiries said "Yes, he is much better." I understood. He speaks in his usual brave bright tone; he will not let us brood over any sorrow hopelessly. He went to the funeral on the 9th.'

*Journal, May* 25, 1878.—'William and I dined at Glen Andred to meet Sir George Nares, pleasant, frank, true sailor.'

Next day Sir George came to call, and when asked for his autograph for one of the children said, 'Boy or girl?'

'A boy, but why do you wish to know?' 'Because if it's for a boy I sign myself only *yours truly*, but if it's for a girl I always put *yours most affectionately!*'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*July*, 1878.

'. . . I do not in the least expect you to get a prize. You have already got the very best one you could by your move up, and tell my dear little F. that much as I rejoice to hear of his well doing I would far rather he did not try for one either if the doing so puts one grain too much weight on him. I would much rather have you healthy and strong than learned and washy—unable to take your part in games now, and hereafter perhaps in the toil of life. I would have you *first* upright and Godfearing, *secondly* strong and healthy, and *thirdly*, if possible with the other two, learned. I shall, I think, attend the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society on the 12th prox. to hear what Captain Nares, etc., have to say on the North Polar Expedition. I wish you and F. could accompany me. You would see a number of distinguished men together from all parts, developed rather in brains and pluck, than in biceps and wrists—your speciality—but still worth seeing. Take the *Daily Telegraph* by all means, but don't let it be your only reading. You should be gathering now here and there a seed to be garnered in your brain for future use.'

*To his Second Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*July*, 1878.

'. . . Prizes are the rewards, as a rule, of "spurts," and therefore not much to be counted on in the long race of life. Steady, honest, fair work, such as a man or boy

can undertake without injuring his physique, is what is required for this world, and the next I suspect.'

*To his Second Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Oct.* 3, 1878.

'The longer I live the more wonderful do life and death appear. Think of how little we do and how short a time we seem to last. I passed through Mr. Field's yesterday, and the thought pressed itself upon me that he had planted and planned, and passed away; and the place he made shall know him no more—and so with all of us. How full the air must be of spirit life if the intermediate state permit such existence! But I must not puzzle your young brain with thoughts of this kind. Trust in God and do right, and come what may you will be the gainer.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Oct.* 13, 1878.

'. . . What you gain or ought to gain at school is the *habit* of working and doing. Much knowledge is not to be expected, and as your whole life is more or less a time of education you may have a chance of applying your early training. I never acquired the power or habit of working, and *therefore* I am most anxious you should. For I would not have you such a man as your father, but a much better and wiser one.

'Would that I were a boy again with a man's will and my present knowledge of the value of attention and work! And when I was your age I was fool enough to avoid the chance of learning as much as I possibly could. It seems to me I might acquire all I know in about ten days' real

work; how much then might I not make my own in ten years.

'I am afraid I remember but very little of Thucydides.

'The impression, however, on my mind is that we used to think the narrative rather easy, but perhaps it only was so in comparison with the speeches, which were very difficult, even a Rugby master giving us an occasional lift in them. Bring the book home with you, of course, and we will try what we can make out of it together. The *Œdipus Rex* I never read, but the chorus of the Greek Play always seems difficult to me, and I believe half of them were *meant* to be misty; quasi-prophetical hints of the punishment of evil, etc., involved purposely in a weird, messy diction—some very grand, no doubt, but some very nearly incomprehensible, and therefore the more appalling to the audience. What a lot on subjects of which I am quite ignorant, except in the most perfunctory way. . . . We are very glad you like the pictures . . . with regard to the *dimidia majorum*, please yourselves. I only sent them in case you might like to put them up, though I don't think *I* should have done so in my own study. The old gentleman was a very fine fellow, and you may be proud of your great-grandfather. The old lady was very good too, but a bit of a Tartar. . . . I went over the other day to call upon Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who had sent to say he should like to see me. He is ninety-three himself and cannot go out. A most extraordinary old man! I remember him as Sir Stratford Canning, our Ambassador at Constantinople during the Crimean War, when he managed the then Sultan as a child. His mind is still perfectly clear and his conversational powers charming. He does not look above sixty-five and is a glorious-looking old man, quoting from Horace, and very much interested in the connections between the Eastern languages and Greek, Latin and English. He has built himself a house upon Frant Green just as you go on, to the right. It is a funny Byzantine place, . . .

mostly passages and stairs, and steps down into rooms. The view is just perfect, over Lord Abergavenny's park . . .'

After thus renewing the acquaintance of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, William Oswell went frequently to see him until his death two years later, finding a new delight each time in the vigorous masculinity and grasp, the unabated force of character, the education and culture, the wide and profound experience of the 'Great Eltchi.'

## CHAPTER XIX.

1878–1885. AGE 60–67.

Afghan War—India not lovingly attached to English rule—Death of Tullie Cornthwaite; what he was and did—Noah's Ark animals—Public speaking; Englishman speaks anyhow or nohow—Courage and tactics of Zulus—Visit to W. Egerton Hubbard—Death of E. W. Cooke—He *said* he was the Duke of Wellington—Sir Woodbine Parish and Congress of Vienna—Greek Iambics—M. de la Morinière—'Hang theology' Rogers—A generous conception of 'Varsity life and expenditure—A graceful acknowledgment of a photograph—A father's letters to his sons—'Life of Bishop Patteson'—Visit to Oxford—The Australian match—'Summer in the Arctic Regions'—The 1843 comet—Lord Shaftesbury's advice—French plums—James Nasmyth—A versatile Bishop—Sojourn in Guernsey—Conflicting claims—Death of Mr. Hubbard—'That excellent fellow, Dr. Acland.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Second Son.*

'*November*, 1878.

'. . . . Sell out your Indian Securities!! There will be trouble there before long. Afghanistan is a difficult place to attack from its mountainous character and narrow defiles, and if any ill-luck befalls us, the rest of India in our rear is not so lovingly attached to our rule as some people seem to believe. Russia, though she may not, at present, be able to swell the ranks of an invading army, may give us lots of trouble with no risk, in the case of

reverses, by fomenting discord between us and our native states. She seems disinclined, too, to leave Turkey. It appears to me so clear that if she once possesses herself of Turkey and the Black Sea, with Asia for her supplies, her position would be inexpugnable, that I cannot understand the supineness of Prussia and the rest of Europe. . . .'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'8, The Lawn,
'St. Leonard's-on-Sea,
'*Nov.* 29, 1878.

'. . . . In anticipation of our giving up this house in March, everyone has selected pieces of furniture for himself, so there will be nothing for sale. There now only remain an old coalscuttle, an attenuated poker, an odd blind and two or three empty gingerbeer bottles for you and F. to make your selections from. Herr S. has brought his *leetle* boy to shew us, and is so delighted with him that he would at any moment undress him, in a shop if handy, but in the open street if not, to shew what a beautiful *skeen* he has. Your Mother and sisters went to see him (the baby, not the Herr) washed yesterday; I believe it was an improving spectacle. Miss C. has been to see the girls bathe and thanks goodness she was not born twenty years (she might have said fifty) later, as she might have had to shew her legs, and been obliged to take baths, which her soul abhors. . . .'

He had promised to go down to the breaking-up party at his youngest son's school, when he heard of the serious illness of his wife's cousin, Mr. Cornthwaite.

'Groombridge,
'*Dec.* 10, 1878.

'My dear little fellow,

'I am afraid I shall disappoint you, but still I think you will agree with me. Cousin Tullie is, I fear,

dying, and although I have not been asked to come up, it is just possible that a telegram might come at any time, and I should not like to be out of the way if I could be of the slightest use or comfort to anyone. . . . Perchance I may be allowed to see the dear old man once more, so I will wait at home in the hope of being asked. You see if I were to be sent for, and be away, I should be very sorry, and if the dear old gentleman were to die before I could get to him or during my stay at St. Leonards, I should feel very much grieved. Will you tell Mrs. Wilkinson this, and also any of your schoolfellows who may remember me, and say how sincerely I trust that all may go off happily and prosperously? I should like very much to have seen my little lad act and to have been present, but you will, I think, understand it will be better I should not.'

Two days later he writes:

'Tullie is dead—the very best educated man I ever met in my life, and one of the most generous, hospitable and modest.'

Tullie Cornthwaite was a naturalist, theologian, artist, geologist, archæologist, philologist, a learned collector of books, shells, eggs, butterflies, minerals, coins, a master of six languages besides his own, and with all this as eager to receive information as he was willing to give it. Living in a delightful rambling old house—The Forest, Walthamstow—for the benefit, apparently, of the countless friends who flocked round him, he availed himself of his wealth to do good all day with both hands—here a loan, there a gift, here a church built, there a young man sent travelling or to college, a sick person to the seaside or abroad. Throughout the summer he gave a series of lavish entertainments to nurses, hospital patients, poor children. Always a student, never a man of action, it is not to be

wondered at that his views on certain subjects were diametrically opposed to those of William Oswell. This was notably the case on that of the education of boys, he holding strongly that private and home tuition was the better plan, Oswell as strongly advocating the boarding-school system, though fully recognising and admitting its defects. Neither succeeded in moving the other from his position, but when Oswell was about to send his eldest boy to school, Mr. Cornthwaite, who was his godfather, with graceful and touching generosity, begged to be allowed to make himself responsible for his education on the lines laid down by his father. Needless to add, the offer was declined.

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Second Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*March*, 1879.

'. . . K. is off to the school, intent on teaching the infant mind the peculiarities of the structure of all animals in the time of Noah as compared with our own; how the pigs were larger in bulk than the elephants, the singing-birds than the pigs, how all things' legs were put on according to one pattern, and jointless; how the calves were green, the dogs light yellow and the hippopotamus a tasty blue. All, all, has changed alas since then save Noah's and his son's coats, which are identical with the ulsters of the present day. I hope, my dear, you will never wear an ulster and look like Shem, Ham, and Japhet.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*March* 10, 1879.

'. . . Mr. Waller Clifton sent me a lot of phloxes which I have distributed over the different beds, so that I trust Hillside will be gay for you at Midsummer. . . .

Who chooses the subjects for your Debating Society? Don't you think they might select one about which you as boys are likely to know more than Cremation *v.* Burial? That's a funny sentence, but let it stand. I think you are rather overdoing it with societies and extra work, Literary, Debating and Eastbournian. The debating I believe in, as it helps you to obtain what an Englishman nearly always wants—clearness in putting thought into words. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of them seem to me to be trying to muddle out what they know of a subject while they are speaking, and so think confusedly and speak ditto. No nation has so little power of expressing its meaning. A Frenchman does it epigrammatically, an Italian fervently, a German sententiously, but an Englishman anyhow or nohow.'

*To his Second Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Mch.* 15, 1879.

'Bromhead was the man who helped to defend Rorke's Drift so well. What a horrid mess all that business has been! And simply because men were too proud to avail themselves of other men's experience. How can two thousand in the open, unprotected by palisade or defence of any kind, ever resist the onrush of twenty thousand as brave as themselves, every bit, and much stronger and more active? Directly Zulus can by weight or daring break a square, it will be all up with Her Majesty's troops. But let there be any trifling obstacles to check the rush of these magnificent fellows—for no men were ever more reckless of life—and then the arms of the civilized army take effect. Otherwise, nothing but death will stop them. In equal numbers our men would of course mow them down, and in open ground might get the better of double their numbers; but they are astute enough to choose their

own battlefields, and are a most formidable foe. I have known them attack a commando of Boers who laagered —that is, connected their wagons with bush and thorn hedges—and lose upwards of five thousand men before giving in. This very river Tugela or one of its tributaries is called in Dutch the *Bluid Riviere* from the immense slaughter which tinged its waters. If our troops had only intrenched themselves they would have done well, but everyone knows better than his father—*hinc illæ lachrymæ*.'

'*May* 2, 1879.

'Full accounts from Zululand to-day make it more difficult to understand how they did not kill more men. They ought to have cut them *all* down. . . . I don't want these poor fellows killed, but one *thorough* business would save much future bloodshed, and settle the war.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*May* 1, 1879.

'. . . Poor old Cicero was put out of all pain yesterday. He managed to walk to his grave, and never moved an inch after the shot. He is buried, and his grave is filled in, and our old faithful friend is gone for ever—very sad, but I could not let him live in pain. . . . I got all the family out of the way, never telling them anything about it; I think I was right. Last looks and words are very painful. We have plenty of his hair, and it is now as if he died in a foreign country.'

The dear old horse Cicero had been ridden, driven and petted by every member of the family for seventeen years. William Oswell told his wife that he had thought of letting her and the children say good-bye to the faithful beast, but 'I went to the stable and did so myself, and it quite broke me down, and I could not expose any of you to the sorrow.'

*To his Second Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Nov.* 20, 1879.

'We returned on Saturday from Mr. Hubbard's after a very pleasant visit. The weather was beautiful, the walking delightful. I wish you could have been with us, and once or twice I found myself coveting other men's goods, and longing for a lot of heather and woodland over which I might wander with my boys. But we have a good many things to be thankful for, so will put off our shooting to a more convenient season. . . . You will never find things quite right this side of Heaven.'

It was always a particular pleasure to him to stay, as he frequently did, with his old friend and schoolfellow William Egerton Hubbard. They had much in common —simplicity, perfect truthfulness, the forgetting not to do good and distribute. He used to say that Mr. Hubbard was the most unselfish sportsman he ever met, quite regardless of his own success and sincerely anxious for that of his guests.

*Journal, November* 28, 1879. — 'William went to Hastings, to the funeral of our boys' kind friend and excellent master Mr. Wilkinson of Quebec House. His death is a sorrow to them and to us.'

In Mrs. Oswell's diary and her husband's letters this year the references to pleasant visits to and from Glen Andred are more than usually numerous. Among many others, meetings are spoken of with McClintock, Glaisher, Long, Holl, McWhirter, Birstadt and Holman Hunt—'a nice, gentle, quiet man' Oswell calls him. But these were the last pages of a delightful chapter.

*Journal, January* 4, 1880.—'Alas! alas! our friend and neighbour Mr. Cooke is dead. He has been hopelessly ill since December 18. We have all been frequently to see his mother and sisters, and William constantly to see him during his illness. He was greatly impressed by his calm cheerfulness and collectedness and his wonderful endurance of pain. But the poor mother who "hoped she might not have to outlive another child"!'

*June* 13, 1880.—'We all went to bid farewell to the Cookes, who leave Glen Andred for good to-morrow.'

*September* 13.—'The Duke and Duchess of Wellington paid a long visit. William knew him well in past years. They were delighted with the horns and greatly interested in the stories—and their teller.'

Once when Oswell was staying at a quiet little country inn the Duke called in his absence. On his return the landlady begged pardon, 'but a gentleman has been to ask for you whilst you was out.' 'Where's his card?' 'He hadn't one with him, sir.' 'Did he leave his name?' 'Well, sir, he *said* he was the Duke of Wellington!'

*Journal, October* 5, 1880.—William and I lunched with the Parishes. Sir Woodbine talked most agreeably, wonderful old man. He has been a great friend of William's for thirty years. We spoke of our picture of the Congress of Vienna and he told us that he drew up the Protocol of the Treaty.'

*October* 23, 1880.—'William went home from Cowley Street to bring Pixie to London. He could not bear to think of the little creature being left alone.'

Pixie was a small, highly intelligent Maltese terrier, who always followed him everywhere out of doors, sitting close to him when he was working in the garden, and on his knee when he was in the house.

In December, 1880, he sent his eldest son to France to

study French, accompanying him on his journey as far as Dover.

'. . . I forgot,' he writes to him late the same evening, 'to tell you to keep before the funnel, though it occurred to me after I got on shore. I flourished my hat as long as I thought I could be seen, and then, as I had two hours to wait, climbed the Castle hill and paraded the town, entering into conversation with a poor, miserable-looking young man—dirty withal, who though apparently in a state of penury, was evidently well educated. We got into warm discussion on Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, he being a stormy dissentient from the Professor's views, and calling upon me to notice the evidence of cataclysmal action on the cliffs. I could have spent a pleasant enough hour with him; but from his appearance I thought he must be insane, and during our colloquy I was constantly on the lookout for his assuming the *rôle* of a royal Bengal tiger, like the poor maniac in Dickens' story. He took himself off at last, annoyed that I did not agree with him. I got home about 4.30 and was off again to Tonbridge at 6.57 to talk to a Mechanics' Institute—returning at 11.30—so I too had a fair day's work.'

The following letters are typical of many written by Oswell to his sons at about this time, and well illustrate his relations with them and the manliness and simplicity of his creed—Fight, pray, work, help, hope.

*To* ——.

'You have rightly interpreted my wishes by silence. I wrote to you as I would have talked to you, and once for all understand that when I do so write confidentially, I require no answer in words—quite the contrary—I should dislike it very much. I only ask you to take into your consideration what I say, bear with it, and if you think

there is truth in it, and your inner man tells you it is right, ask God to give you power to act upon it. My recent letters to you have, I fear, been of rather a serious type, but you are soon to enter upon manhood, and your future has been very constantly before me of late. There are a good many roads to the wrong place, and I am very anxious to save you from making a failure of your life. You have the beginning of life and the foundations of your character very much in your own hands. If the sketch be not well outlined in boyhood, the chances are that others will fill in the picture you yourself, with God's help, ought to draw. Now there's an end to all my moralizing for the present at least, my boy. I love you right well, and would, God knows, direct you aright. But I'm a poor guide. May you be kept out of the ditch nevertheless! Now remember I wish for no answer to *one* word of this, let us have it as a secret between ourselves. No one else sees what I say.'

*To* ——.

'I am very sensible of, and value very highly your desire to conform to my wishes . . . and I on my part would beg you to believe that I will never put any direct or implied restraint upon your free action that I do not conscientiously consider necessary. . . . I never wish to treat you as a boy *now*, and shall be always glad to talk any matter over with you, showing you my reasons, before asking you to accept the result. Trust me, no greater proof of manliness can be given, than willingness to submit to advice and authority. The most obedient captain makes—*cæteris paribus*—the best general. . . . God bless you, my lad, now and always.'

*To* ——.

'Rest assured that all you tell me is kept to myself. I just read out loud the end part and scraps here and there, but for the rest it is between you and me entirely. I *ask*

for no confidence, in fact I feel I would rather you depended on the only One who can render you true aid—God. One only thing I would assure you of, that you have my full, heartfelt sympathy. The battle at the beginning of life is hard to fight, and we are all of us often worsted—and when *Liber scriptus proferatur, in quo totum continetur, unde mundus judicetur,* I'm afraid it will be found that it is not only the young, but the old and gray-headed too. . . . I don't mention this as any excuse, but to show that there is no *spécialité* in sin and weakness, and there should be no morbid repining — the trying to do better by God's help is the only true repentance worthy of man; and even in this effort our deeds will never above half equal our intentions. . . . It's a lucky thing for us that God, not man, is to be our judge, or we should come poorly off and have but small chance of wearing the crown of victory. Fight and pray, pray and fight—*non per sylvas sed per castra nobis iter est ad astra.* I who write this to you know and feel my own many infirmities to be heavier tenfold and darker than yours can be, and yet I know in my heart that if I can truly repent of them, and in doing better prove my repentance, I, even I, need not despair of forgiveness. However, I did not mean to write all this . . . it has slipped out unwittingly; only don't look back too much to what's behind, but stretch forward to what's to come. . . . Keep yourself warm. Do you want money?'

*To* ——.

'Of sins in thought, word and deed in times gone by, ask forgiveness, and forget them, remembering always that you *can* in future if you *will* avoid the latter items in this account, and that although *thoughts* will arise in all our minds, if we fight against them to the best of our power by prayer, by occupation and by determined repression, they will but very seldom run into open sin, and even then we shall be forgiven if we are ready to renew the

struggle. We are fallible as our fathers were. All God requires of us is a determined resistance to what we know and our conscience tells us is evil; and the more we resist the more power we shall gain, if we ask for it aright. We must not be discouraged because we fall. This is the trial of our faith. The crown is given to those who endure; and if you don't seem to get it here, you will hereafter. . . . Use your powers for some *definite* end. This you will find a great help. Whatever line of life you eventually enter upon, stick to it. Try to do your duty in *it*, help those who are in your path—there will be plenty of them—don't go the right or the left to seek adventures, but trust to somebody else's path cutting the *terra incognita* on either side of you; in fact it has come to me in a few words, do your duty in *that state* of life into which it has pleased God to call you. . . . I don't think I am very fond of talking of my own feelings, but to help a fellow man, or try to do so, one must stretch a point; *a fortiori* for a son . . . I would ask you not to take any notice of what I have written. Having once, for your sake, come out of my shell, let me remain in it for the rest of my time.'

*To* ——.

'Take as your motto *Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito*. This is the line to take you through life too, my boy. Ask God to shew you the right path and then stick to it, and if you by chance get out of it at any time, don't lose heart, pray for strength, and fight through thick and thin till you get back to it again. You have faults, who has not? but you will not let useless repining be one of them —that's right. . . .'

*Journal, December* 21, 1880.—'William taught at the night school which he, Mr. Saint and Mr. Whitelock have started.'

*January* 22, 1881.—'William had fever and could not go out. He spent the day in writing Greek Iambics.'

*To his Youngest Son.*

'*March* 16, 1881.

'. . . . Attend during school hours as much as you like, but then dismiss all work from your mind, and play or walk, and enjoy yourself with all your might. I trust you take sufficient exercise. I don't want my boys to get lazy. F. has been working so hard of late that he has not had much time for good, active, muscular exertion; but I hope now both he and you will take *quant. suff.* Stick to drilling and voluntary gymnastics. I prefer, if possible, my six yards of son straight and upright.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*March* 22, 1881.

'I want you some day to go to Paris and see if you can find out a M. de la Morinière. I think he has published a good many books, so perhaps some of your friends, or the publishers of Paris, would know his address. . . . He tried to teach me French when I was in Paris in 1853, and had a very lazy, idle and stupid pupil. He was the very nicest Frenchman I ever met, courteous, cheery and good. He may not perhaps remember me, but remind him that Lord Munster, I think it was, was taking lessons from him at the same time. He always wore his hat on the back of his head —but was a clever fellow nevertheless. M. de la Morinière used to live in the street that turns out of the main street parallel with the Tuileries gardens, and leads to the Place Vendôme and Rue de la Paix. . . . If you can manage to hunt him up, give him my very sincere remembrances and very best regards. He was most good, kind and patient to the unworthy me, and a very gentleman to boot, to the backbone. . . . I want you to learn French thoroughly well, and should think the end, if gained, cheap at £500. . . . Pixie, as usual, interferes with my writing.'

M. de la Morinière was away from Paris when the call was made, but it was promptly acknowledged :

'Your card has been forwarded to me. If you are the same Mr. Oswell that I knew in Paris about thirty years ago, and of whom I have retained so pleasant and lively a recollection, I should be much obliged by your telling me so. Each time that I have been to London I have exerted myself to the utmost to obtain a clue to your whereabouts. Happening recently to read a book on hunting and travel in Africa, in which your name appeared, I wrote to the author, who, however, replied that he was unable to give me any information as to where you lived. I have been suffering since July, 1880, from a severe nervous and paralytic affection, but I am making an effort to write you a few lines which I shall complete hereafter according to your reply. If on the contrary I am addressing a stranger, I beg him to excuse this letter.'

Later, when a meeting took place, nothing could exceed the eager interest and delight of the fine old gentleman in hearing tidings of 'my noble, chivalrous pupil.' Of course Oswell wrote to him at once, and soon afterwards received a very touching reply :

'. . . Oh ! that my debilitated hand could write as easily as before. I would tell you how deeply engraved on my old memory, nay on my *heart*, your recollection is. . . . I am very ill and dying, and it is for me a great trial to write this already long letter, and yet I should like to make it longer still. . . . It is a mere debt of gratitude which I am happy to pay.

'Believe me, my dear Friend,

'Yours most affectionately.'

*Journal, May* 24, 1881.—'To our great pleasure Mr. Rogers of St. Botolph's ("Hang theology" Rogers) called with his

sister Mrs. Marlborough-Pryor. I knew him years ago. We stayed together with the Jardines at Shiplake, and I well remember an expedition when he and Mr.—now Canon—Lonsdale rowed Mrs. Lonsdale and me from Henley to Reading, and took us to a fair. He was in the wildest spirits, shouting out at all the boats and people we passed, laughing, joking, chaffing—rather scandalizing me, I think, till Mrs. Lonsdale told me to what admirable account he turned his overflowing jovial geniality in getting a hold over the Smithfield butchers among whom he was working, and then utilizing the influence so acquired to induce them to listen when he spoke on grave subjects.'

*June* 26, 1881.—'William and I went to service at the Mission Church. A poor shy lad offered him a hymn-book; he does not know a note of music, but unwilling, in his delicate consideration, that the boy should think his loan unappreciated, he took the book and declaimed the words in a sort of singsong.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Oct.* 26, 1881.

'I am glad you subscribed to the Beagles, and would very earnestly beg you to enter into all the wholesome amusements of your fellows. I wish your life at college to be a happy one, and, within the limits I am sure you will observe, a *perfectly* free one. Whether you spend £— a year more or less does not, I can most truly assure you, make any perceptible difference, and I would not have you stint yourself for five times the amount. . . . Pray do not pinch yourself or make yourself remarkable by not joining in all the usual amusements of your fellows. I can allow you £— a year. I know you will not contract debts, and therefore am able to calculate what you will cost exactly, and that amount I can spare, and wish you to spend. I do most earnestly beg you not to cramp your young life by unnecessary parsimony. Supposing the worst, the

money spent now is only spent in advance for an end, and you would never, under any circumstances, when we are gone, be £— a year the poorer by it, while you would have something pleasant to look back to, instead of a recollection of a straitened time. What I have, I only care for as far as it may help my wife and children. When we are gone there will be plenty to *help* each one of you boys in any line of life you may adopt (and I don't wish you to have enough to live without work) and a *sufficiency* for the girls, so don't trouble yourself about a few pounds more or less.'

On Christmas Day Mrs. Oswell sent Mr. Conrad Cooke a photograph of her husband. His warm-hearted acknowledgment gives some indication of the enthusiastic love and respect William Oswell most unconsciously inspired :

'. . . Will you accept the best and most affectionate thanks for the most charming Christmas greeting we have ever received, and one which will be a delight to us all for many years to come? There is no one living the mention of whose name conjures up such genuine feelings of pleasure in every heart, both young and old, in this household, as your dear, good husband, who is dear to everyone who knows him, and good to all the world besides. As to myself, I am always afraid to say half of what I really think and feel about him, for I should so dread you, or any of you, thinking that what I said was in the slightest degree an exaggeration of what I really felt. After all, however, one thing must lead you to feel that this could not be the case—you yourself knowing better than anyone else what Mr. Oswell is, know that to exaggerate either his goodness or the charm of his companionship would be an impossibility. . . . Fanny and I can only say that our admiration of his whole soul and character and the value we attach to his friendship are perfectly inexpressible in words.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Eldest Son.*

'*Jany.* 18, 1882.

'Do you know as I wandered through the Temple the other day, and afterwards went into the Courts at Westminster, I said to myself, If I were to begin life again I would choose the Bar. The persuasion that I could have succeeded was so strong upon me that I felt certain of my choice. . . .'

*To his Youngest Son.*

'*Feb.* 6, 1882.

'. . . I hope you will like the "Life of Bishop Patteson." Your Mother will send it you to-day. She has read a good deal of it aloud, and the latter part of the first volume is very interesting. The man had faults and weaknesses to get rid of, and he managed to shuffle them off and come out in strength. The first part gives you but little idea of what he is going to be—he is too self-conscious, too self-tormenting, too mistrustful of himself and his mission, but anon he comes out bright enough. I knew his father a little, that is to say I have met him and dined at his house. . . . The old Judge and his wife were very charming, kindly, unaffected people indeed. . . . I am rather sorry your mathematical time has been increased, for I know no son of mine will ever make anything of mathematics, but still you will try to do your best, and by trying earnestly you will gain more than if you mastered fluxions, and submitting is of more use, very frequently, than a victory.'

*Journal, February* 15, 1882.—'Went with William to Tunbridge Wells, where he gave a delightful lecture on Africa—a full audience of intelligent middle-class people.'

*February* 18, 1882.—'Mr. N. and seventeen boys came to see horns, etc., and be talked to!'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Second Son.*

'*May* 3, 1882.

'Your affectionate letter ought to have been replied to at once, but though I failed to thank you for all your good wishes, they were most deeply and truly welcome. Would that I could believe I was anything like what you in your love seem to think me. I love you all as a father can love, and watch every step in your way to manhood and character, more closely and anxiously than perhaps you give me credit for. As example, father, friend, I am afraid I have not made much of it, and it sometimes seems strange that my children should bear me the affection I think they do, and I am very content to fancy they can find some good in me. Would that I might hope I might be made more worthy of their love.'

A fortnight later he took his wife to Oxford for a week.

*To his Elder Daughter.*

'43, Broad Street,
'*May*, 1882.

'. . . It is decided that we do not return until Thursday. . . . My only fear is that we hinder F.'s studies and are likely to become rather too much of a good thing, for we lunch and tea out daily, and are most royally entertained. I intend making a long array of calls to-morrow, to return thanks. I have met the sisters of my old South American companion, Brooke. He is dead, I am sorry to say, but it gave me very great pleasure indeed to foregather with his sisters, who are very charming women in the best sense. Yesterday was the commencement of the Australian match; I went to see it. I am afraid it will be a very one-sided affair; the bowling of the Oxford men is

not half steady enough for the crack team that opposes them. Massie, who made 206, never gave a chance, so far as I saw, up to 200, and played magnificently; they (Australians) field so well together that it is a sight to see them, whereas, between ourselves—tell it not in Gath—Groombridge or Oxford—the Oxonians are rather deficient in this respect. I am off again directly to see the continuation, and it is a pity you are not here to go with us, for it is too tiring for your Mother, and I don't think F. cares so much as I do for the game, besides he is in lecture. He is wonderfully nice, thoughtful and affectionate — very anxious we should appear to the best advantage to his friends, who, by the way, are strikingly attentive to us for his sake. . . .'

In October, 1882, he went with his wife to spend a few days in Derbyshire with an old Rugby schoolfellow. During his stay he walked through a heavy snowstorm to Locko to call on his former most dear friend, Captain Drury-Lowe, whom he had not met for many years. On his return, in reply to an inquiry from his hostess as to whether he had not found it terribly cold, he said with a smile, 'Cold? No. Lowe gave me such a welcome as would have made summer in the Arctic Regions.'

*To his Youngest Son.*

'Bakewell,
'Derbyshire,
'*Oct.* 19, 1882.

'. . . There is a charming fellow staying in this house, a Mr. Barber, a very clever man, deeply read, practically skilled in astronomy, very quiet and retiring withal, but ready to give any information he may be asked for. The comet is a general theme; he says that the nucleus of this one and of the one before it are solid. . . . Tell K. this,

for we had some talk about it, and I said I didn't think it had been demonstrated to be so.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Oct.*, 1882.

'Have you seen the comet? Mr. Barber awoke your mother and myself on Tuesday night at 4 o'clock or so and we had a magnificent view of a really fine object. If you have a chance, use it and look S.E. near the horizon from 4.30 to 5.30; but you must look sharp, for he has passed his perihelion nearly six weeks, and is leaving us at the rate of a hundred and eighty miles a second. I dare say you know the whole history of this visitor, but if not, as he is an interesting one, it may be worth while to remember that this is the comet of '43, which was then believed to be a long period one, but which suddenly, after thirty-seven years' absence only, appeared in '80, and then again, to the alarm of the world in general, two years and four months afterwards in '82. His orbit is, of course, diminishing. He was very near the sun—in his luminous atmosphere—last time, and will probably return in a year, then possibly fall into the sun, doing something, nobody knows what; or revolve in a more circular orbit. My own belief is that the effect will not be great even if the sun burns him. But his nucleus is solid, as proved by the spectrum, and internally much disturbed, as proved by the yellow lines (sodium) being very irregular, and when at perihelion travelling at the rate of four hundred miles per second, so that the sun may get a hard rap. But how many such has he received since creation?'

In reply to a letter from his second son asking for advice as to what attitude to adopt in a matter which just then was attracting some attention at Oxford, he writes:

'*Nov.* 6, 1882.

'. . . I return Mr. ——'s letter. . . . I think I should call on him, but I should beware of looking upon him as the martyr he evidently regards himself. I do not know what the tendency of the essay may have been, but if, as I suppose, it was antagonistic to generally received belief, I do not think Mr. —— as a Tutor in a College was right in publishing it, and I do think that the authorities of the College exercised a wise discretion when you take into consideration the influence that a person in Mr. ——'s position might have brought to bear on his pupils. I only speak quite generally of the book or the way in which its condemnation has been arrived at. I *know* nothing. I cannot say I quite like the tone of his letter, for surely his views, whatever they may be, are those of the minority; and unless they are *vital* in his opinion, which I don't suppose he would assert, he has no authority or right to inculcate them on young minds to their bewildering.'

In December, 1882, two dear old friends, Mr. Ashton and Mrs. Cooke, died. Their funerals were on the same day. He went to Mrs. Ashton's. On his return he told his wife that a small legacy had been left him as a souvenir, and he suggested she should write to Lord Shaftesbury for advice as to how best to dispose of it in charity. A reply came by return of post recommending The Surgical Aid Society, Miss Rye's Homes and King Edward's School; and he insisted on the gifts being made in his wife's name.

*Journal, January*, 1883.—'Mr. Whitelock fell and dislocated his shoulder. William hurried down to him and stayed with him three or four hours until the arrival of the Dr., whom he assisted in reducing the dislocation.'

*February* 2, 1883.—'William went up to town for the funeral of his mother's and uncle's friend Mr. Philip Smith Duval, whom he had known from childhood.'

It was a pleasant token of the fidelity of the old gentleman's friendship that every year since the babyhood of Oswell's elder daughter he sent her a large, very splendid box of French plums. Smaller boxes came regularly, too, for the boys until they were supposed, most erroneously, to have outgrown their taste for such things.

*To his Youngest Son.*

'*March* 5, 1883.

'. . . Pixie, Minnie and Co. are fairly well, the senior member of the Firm insisting on sitting on my knee and so necessitating this sniggling writing. . . . I took K. over to call on Mr. Nasmyth, the steam-hammer man, at Penshurst, last week. He is a most interesting, clever fellow, and I have just got his Autobiography which you will find worth reading. He is well up in all subjects, and his drawings are surprisingly beautiful and wonderful. . . . Mr. Saint is better, Mr. Whitelock still crippled. B. the shoemaker is recovering from a very bad attack of lung inflammation. Mrs. R. and old Mrs. D. are interesting convalescents, and the recipients of daily feeds and occasional warm stockings from your Mother, who hunted all over London for a pair big enough for the latter lady. . . . The sun is just breaking through the mist—12 o'c.—and I must get out to the village and garden.

'Yours always very affectionately.'

In April he first met Bishop Durnford, at the houses of two neighbours. After this there were several such meetings every year, and he was never tired of admiring the extraordinary versatility and mental and bodily vigour of that remarkable man. Mrs. Oswell recalls one occasion on which he turned from discussing with the greatest accuracy and interest the incidents and dresses of the last Drawing-room, to plunge into a profound controversy with

her husband on Etruscan glyphs, thence gliding easily into an animated conversation with their daughter about cats and their ways.

At a dinner-party at which the Bishop was present Oswell began a Greek quotation which was apposite to some subject that arose. His attention was claimed by his hostess at the moment and the quotation was not completed. Some months later he met the Bishop, who, as he shook hands, supplied the remaining words with a smile and a bow.

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Second Son.*

'*May* 22, 1883.

'Just before an exam. a vacation is positively required; pray don't let any mistaken idea of my aspirations for your success trouble you for an instant. . . . Though in a modified form, I know what exams. are—chances to a great extent; a paper to your mind and you come out on the back of an elephant—one a little the other way and you have to put up with a Shetland pony or maybe a mouse. . . .'

*Journal, June* 23-30, 1883.—'A really charming visit to Leonardslee. How beautiful everything is in this lovely place! the master of it wonderfully gentle and genial. Quite a large party—Loders, Egerton Hubbards, five of us, and the home daughter and her father. Delightfully *talkative*, friendly meals. William and the girls rode a great deal. The old schoolfellows are quietly happy in each other's company. An affectionate farewell all round. We have had a most happy week and are grateful for it.'

A fortnight later William Oswell and his wife started with their younger daughter to join their other children in

Guernsey. Finding when they came on board that dogs were not allowed below, he stayed on deck with Pixie all night for fear she might be lonely.

The sojourn in the island was a great delight to him. First with his three boys, and afterwards with the whole family, he explored it in every direction, rejoicing in the variety of the coast-line, the colour of the sea, the beauty of the water-lanes, and, above all, the perfection and luxuriance of the flowers—the myrtle, the blue hydrangeas, the carnations, the aloes. One of his earliest expeditions was to Lihou Island. The seven hundred yards causeway was uncovered, and the tide said to be going out ; but this proved to be a mistake, for on returning he found the causeway completely submerged, and the current setting strongly between the two islands. He did not hesitate for a moment, but picking up Pixie, plunged in, calling to his sons to follow. 'We must get across if possible, or the dear mother will be in a terrible fright.' But, hampered by the dog, he found the current and the sharp rocks too much to battle against, and the party was forced to turn back. It was three hours before a boat ventured to the rescue, and home was not reached until nearly ten o'clock.

*Journal, September* 28, 1883.—'We all returned to Groombridge, and received a touchingly warm welcome from the neighbours. "Ah, sir," cried one of the publicans, as he came running out to meet William, "it *is* good to have you back again. While you were away it seemed as if we were all shut up in a box and had lost the key!"'

Towards the end of November a letter from his second son at Oxford spoke of his being ill, and of Sir Henry Acland's having taken him into his own house to nurse him, with his daughter's kind help. Sir Henry supplemented the letter with a few lines of reassurance, saying that it was not then necessary for anyone to come, and

promising that if the symptoms became more serious he would telegraph. In a few days the summons arrived, and Oswell prepared to obey it by the next train. As he was leaving the house a telegram was put into his hands, begging him to go to Horsham to his friend Mr. Hubbard, who was dying. He immediately telegraphed to Dr. Acland, asking whether his boy's state was so grave as to render his presence *imperative*, and on hearing that it was not, set off for Leonardslee, arriving, to his thankfulness, in time to be affectionately recognised by the dying man. He sat up all night with him, and was with him when the end came. Returning to Groombridge late the following evening, he was so worn out by the double trouble and anxiety that his voice was barely audible across the room. Very early next morning he was on his way to Oxford, whither a letter followed him from Mr. Hubbard's eldest son :

'We all want you to have a memorial of him who is gone — my father's watch. . . . For my part I ask you to accept it with deeper feelings of gratitude than I have almost ever felt before. At the time of a great shock, throughout a heavy trial, you came with such a power of support and comfort that I shall never forget. . . .'

And his wife added :

'I do not think any of us will ever forget what a comfort and *stay* and help you were that last day and night of our dear father's life.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Youngest Son.*

'*Dec.* 13, 1883.

'At Oxford I heard a great deal of learned talk and felt quite reconciled to being a fool, for I think there is nothing

so dull as your ponderously clever man. However, that excellent fellow Dr. Acland was an exception to the rule, for he is most kind, genial and warm-hearted, and so is his little trump of a daughter, Angie. God bless them both, they were right kind and good to me and F. Had he belonged to them they could not have done one thing more.'

## CHAPTER XX.

1885–1890. AGE 67–72.

Knight-errantry in doing good—Not forgetful to entertain strangers—Silver wedding—Dulverton—Home Rule Bill—The work of the world is done by screws—Ormonde's Derby—Symond's Yat—Life happier when acquaintances fewer—Bank clerks—Coventry Patmore—Jolly in a cottage—The sweet sense of providing—Popularity at Oxford—Helping lame dogs over stiles—The little horn—Accepting help to provide luxuries—Death of a faithful old servant—A sick grandchild—The Magniacs of Colworth—The pleasure of helping—Not much of a man for 'indications'—Modern weddings—Missions—Long engagements—'Wanny'—Lewin Hill.

AT the beginning of 1885 two of the sons left home for their work. Their father writes to the elder:

'. . . The house feels emptiness without its occupants. Now you are all going away from us, I think I and the old lady must go into smaller quarters. . . . Oh dear! "I knew you all as babies and now you are elderly men!" Oh how I trust you will all live better and more useful lives than your father. At all events have some fixed employment, and do good to those on your own line of march *first*—the cases that come under your observation in your daily course of life. If everyone would give himself to alleviate the misery he *knows*, the world would be better. We are too *knight-erratic* in our desire of doing

good. . . . I trust God may give you health and strength to follow up your profession successfully, but if He should see fit that it should be otherwise, you will remember that you have always a heart and home here, so long as we live. Give work a trial, but should the long sitting and close rooms prove too much for you, as they well may, come home to us again; you shall be as welcome as daylight.'

*Journal, February* 20, 1885.—'William came in whilst I was holding my Mothers' Meeting, and fancying I was tired took the book from my hands and read for me. He constantly does this.'

*February* 21, 1885.—'William went to S—— to enquire after Mr. —— and finding Mrs. —— very anxious to move him, but not venturing to have him lifted for fear of hurting him, picked him up in his strong, gentle arms and carried him to the other bed prepared for him.'

April 12 was his and his wife's Silver Wedding day. Among the many letters that greeted them was one from their sister, Lady Lees, who was abroad:

'As for you, William, I wonder if any brother ever entered into any family who could have been to his sisters all that you have been to us these twenty-five years; so while I am thanking God for having blessed Aggie with such a husband, I also from my heart thank Him for having blessed us with such a brother.'

A party of nineteen slept in the house, and presents came from all directions. A few days previously Mr. and Mrs. Oswell had had their likenesses taken for the occasion, and one was given to each of the guests.

*Journal, April* 27, 1885.—'William's birthday. We heard of my Aunt M. C.'s death. He immediately started for Hastings to afford what help and comfort he could to her only surviving sister, and remained for the funeral.'

*May* 26, 1885.—'William drove some strangers up the hill and took them through house and garden.'

*July* 5, 1885.—'A stranger called and paid a visit of three hours.'

Such visits were of constant occurrence. Oswell was very fond of inviting in any passers-by who looked tired or hot, and they were not allowed to go without something to eat and drink and a bunch of flowers. Sometimes there were two or three sets at the same time, in different rooms.

On August 10, 1885, he went with his family to Dulverton in Somerset. The simplicity of the place and the friendliness of the people charmed him, and he enjoyed planning and making expeditions. Two of them stood out ever afterwards prominently in his recollection—a meet of the staghounds at Winsford Hill, with its wonderful picturesqueness and excitement, and the subsequent six hours' drive after the hunt over the moor; and a long, cloudless afternoon spent on the sweet-scented heather in the wild silence of Dunkery Beacon.

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*Feb.* 21, 1886.

'. . . What says the London world as to the chance of the passing of the Irish Bill? I fear Gladstone has some chance. An old sinner! It's true he won't live for ever, but suppose the measure is not carried, what will be the condition of Ireland now that he has thrown open the door to hope? And if murders and dynamite are not to hold the country in terror, and the Irish and Irish Americans do not gain their end, how are matters to be kept down save by a severe lesson at which all the world will cry shame! Blood will flow pretty freely if once martial law is proclaimed and the troops set in motion. Well! I shan't be here to see it, I dare say, but

I think the G.O.M. has made a mistake, though perhaps I am not much of a judge.'

In reply to a request from his youngest son that he would choose some books for a birthday-present, he writes from Ide Hill on April 18, 1886:

'. . . Thank you for asking me about books. I would rather leave it to you, with the remark that I like anything in philology, natural history or *quaint* history, and do not lean in any way to treatises on vanishing numbers or powers of curves; while fluxions, and calculi, whether integral or differential, are to me *anathema maranatha* —worse than dysentery or stone! Max Müller's "Science of Language," I have never read, and, if I can understand it, should like to try it, or the first volume of Sayce. . . . Sigrid is fast becoming mottled and fat, and behaves like an angel—no original sin—no original stomachache. Mary Rickman is here, working like a little Briton.'

*To his Youngest Son.*

'St. Leonards,
'*June* 1, 1886.

'. . . I agree to your plan of joining a reading party on the Wye, and will send you money when you require it. . . . There is only one request I would make—that you will not try to do the thing too cheaply and dirtily. . . . I can give you £— easily, so live as a ploughboy if you like, but sleep as a gentleman. If you go to Hereford, call on that excellent fellow LLoyd Oswell; he lives at Harewood Parsonage, near Ross.

'. . . Don't read seven hours a day to get a double first. It isn't worth while ruining health for any book-learning. Be steady, read steadily but not exhaustingly. Learning is a good thing but is often bought much

too dear by loss of health and acquisition of pedantry. The work of the road is done by screws and the work of the world by screws too—that is by not too perfect and sound scholars—as a rule.'

Yielding to his sons' eager wish, he went with them to the Derby this year, and enjoyed seeing Ormonde and The Bard run quite as much as they did.

*To his Second Son.*

'*Aug.* 19, 1886.

'. . . I feel Robert's* death very much, not so much, I think, because he was close to me, as because a good staunch friend by falling has made a gap which none other can stop so far as I am concerned, and through some mistake I was not warned in time of his imminent danger—in fact knew nothing of any change until all was over. I should like to have been with him at the last. This is selfish, but he too would I know have liked that I should be within call. Poor dear old fellow! I feel just like a twin left alone. We have known each other for more than sixty years, intimately.'

On September 8 he started from East Grinstead very early in the morning, and went a journey of forty miles to see a servant who was dying, returning in time to take his family to Symond's Yat, where they spent three delightful weeks, he, according to his wont, exploring the whole neighbourhood on foot, revelling in the quietness and beauty of the place and its surroundings, and sharing every pleasure with his wife and children, whether it was the glorious view from the top of the Yat or the Buckstone, the boating on the Wye, or the foregathering with his LLoyd Oswell relations.

* His first cousin, Robert Rolland Cotton.

The winter was spent at St. Leonard's, where just at first, after the 'fair quiet' and solitude of Symond's Yat, he found the numbers of visitors rather oppressive.

*To his Second Son.*

'1, Maze Hill Terrace,
'*Oct.*, 1886.

'I saw in the paper the other day a quotation from Cornewall Lewis to the effect that "life would be very bearable save for its pleasures," and I would propose to add "its numberless *acquaintances* for whom you care nothing, and by whom you are only tolerated, but whose visits you must receive and return." I have to lift my hat to every second person I meet, so when I want a walk, go into the bye-ways and hedges and save the new hat your Mother has insisted on buying. We go in a good deal for the aristocracy now — Barons, Counts and Baronets—a Knight is of no account in these days. Life was truer and happier when acquaintances were fewer.'

*To his Youngest Son.*

'*Nov.*, 1886.

'I cannot help pitying all young clerks in banks or offices, their life seems to me so *bornée*—plod, plod, plod, over most uninteresting work in the success of which they have no individual interest, year after year, with no ultimate hope save an occasional £10 or £20 rise in their salaries, and security, as long as they keep their health, of bread to eat. Were I young again how much rather would I go out to the most "dissolute island" in my shirt or even fig-leaf, and trust to the chapter of accidents for providing my stomach with victuals and my legs with trousers! How a man can go round the same mill, in the same track, for twenty, thirty, forty years beats me. I am

thankful there *are* such, and *most* thankful I am not one of them. I have been fool enough to promise to read some characters out of the "Winter's Tale," I think, with a mixed multitude. I'm a weak fool, for it's what I detest, and what I can't do even decently, for my voice has but one tone and no variations. I must try and get a stomachache by Thursday.'

At the end of the month news reached him of the death of Mrs. James Macleay, whom he had known first in Africa in 1844.

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*Jan.* 29, 1887.

'I did not get back from the funeral, which was at Godstone, till 9 p.m. When one outlives one's generation this is what must be looked for—but nevertheless in this instance it was very sad for me, for I loved her as a sister, and though I have seen but little of her of late years, she was one of the old friends never ousted by the new. They all looked broken down, as well they might, for she was the best of mothers and wives.'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'1, Maze Hill Terrace,
'St. Leonards-on-Sea,
'*Feb.* 7, 1887.

'I am so very sorry not to have shaken you by the hand before parting. I did not think the train was starting, and having just said good-bye to the Aclands was on the look-out for you, when off you were, and I missed my chance. I am very sorry, but it's too late. I hate your going away without a last word and last shake of the hand. God bless and keep you, my lad. Come back to us again soon and I will behave better. . . .'

Early or late, winter or summer, storm or shine, he made it an invariable practice to accompany any of his children to the station when they were leaving home, and to meet them on their return.

*Journal, February* 17, 1887.—'William and I lunched with the Coventry Patmores, enjoying ourselves extremely. Mr. Patmore said among other things that he was very fond of novels and always read or had one read aloud every evening. He did not care for *sensation*, but agreed with me in hearty appreciation of Miss Austen and Mrs. Gaskell.'

*To his Elder Daughter.*

'*May* 21, 1887.

'The older I grow the more contented I am so far as I myself am concerned. I must say I sometimes wish a nice little legacy would fall in to me that I might give you and W. and the rest of my good children a rather brighter, happier youth . . . but that's all. I don't care a rush for myself or anything connected with my own fads; and indeed, though I like my own house and garden, I would quite willingly give them up, to feel that we were giving the boys especially, enough to eat and drink and clothe themselves withal. They would do anything I know to help keep themselves and, please God, may do so some day, but until that day comes I delight in having them dependent on me, for my own sake, though not for theirs.'

A day or so after this his eldest son was able to tell him that he had earned a sum of money sufficient to live on for more than a year. The sympathetic congratulations which always added a hundredfold to the pleasure felt on such occasions, came, of course, by return of post:

'OXFORD,
'*May* 25, 1887.

'MY DEAR BOY,

'. . . I feel most entirely with you in your satisfaction at starting on your own ship, and would not for a moment deprive you of the delight of independence . . . but all I can say from the bottom of my heart is that . . . the greatest pleasure your Mother or I can have is the helping of our own, and we are both very sad sometimes that we have not been able to do so more effectively. We have three of the best sons made, who have tried in every way to help us much more than we have them. . . . As to the little aid we have given you, we have had ten thousand times its value in the affection and uprightness of our children. . . . Why, you are *ours*, of us, and I am sure we can both say much dearer to us than our own earthly comfort supposing we were sacrificing it, which we are not. I rejoice for your sake that you should see this chance of independence; for my own, I fear I shall miss the sweet sense of providing; and what I say to you I would be understood to say of your brothers also when their day begins to break. My children and their Mother are the bright spots in my sky. God keep them now and ever. Everyone kind and hospitable, and all goes brightly. We have excellent lodgings with a really charming sitting-room looking out upon a quaint, prim little garden with a large conservatory at the end. . . .'

*Journal, May* 28, 1887. — 'We returned well pleased after a most pleasant sojourn at Oxford, seeing Aclands, Inges, Mrs. Giles, etc. William was extraordinarily popular with all the nice young fellows to whom we were introduced. It was a pretty sight to see him immediately surrounded by one set after another, all listening with frank delight to his charming conversation.'

*August* 23, 1887.—'William drove me to pay several calls, picking up one old woman and giving her a two miles lift

on our way out, and another on our way home. He constantly does this sort of thing.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Elder Daughter.*

'*Dec.* 14, 1887.

'Old Mr. S. was put up on Sunday and gave us a most unintelligible sermon on the little horn and the end of the world, which ought, according to him, to have come in 1870, and as W. adds, Mr. S. had no idea why it hadn't kept its time. He arrived at this conclusion by the most intricate form of cryptogram, by additions and divisions infinite, making the most terrible muddles. For as all was extempore, he kept going over and quartering his ground afresh, about six times. Donelly's Baconian theory is a trifle to what it was. But the old man is an example to us all, notwithstanding his determination that we shall all go to perdition unless we do as he bids us. The most lovely day! I am sitting with the windows wide open and the sunshine streaming in.'

At the beginning of the next year he decided on letting Hillside for a time, and many friends who knew what his home, the village and his garden were to him, wrote their sympathy. But grateful as he was for it, he had no need for it. When once he arrived at a decision, he never had any misgivings or regrets, but set himself to make the very best of everything it involved.

*To* —— ——.

'*Jan.* 1, 1888.

'I should be quite happy to live in a single room in a cottage, and do what I could to make matters smoother to some poor suffering human being. I have not, in these

days, the very least personal wish for money or position. Just enough to supply daily wants, would do for me, but of course this savage mode of life is only fitted for me as a man.'

*To* ——.

'*Jan.* 3, 1888.

'I thank you most heartily for your most touching and affectionate letters and for the self-denying offers they contain, which as tokens of your love I feel down to the bottom of my heart and in my eyes, though I cannot accept them; for by so doing I should lose my self-respect and make a burden for myself far heavier than the present little bundle, which I really don't notice at all. What a mean selfish fellow I should be to rob you, just to give myself a few months' longer tenure of a too expensive establishment. When you are quite sure that you are making a mistake and the remedy is at hand, apply it at once. . . . A man has no right to accept help to provide himself with luxuries—when starving, that's another thing. . . . Our means, with all deductions, are as good as yours or better, and would you have me rob you and yours to pamper myself and mine? . . . I am right thankful to have been able to start our children in life, and only regret I shall not have so much to leave them as I hoped. Don't for one moment think I shall be grieved to part from this house and gardens and surroundings, for I shall rejoice, as things are, to be rid and quit of them. You must understand too that the older one grows the less one sets one's heart on this or that. It is easier much, sometimes, to let go than to hold on. . . . Don't you trouble for us, we are doing that which is just and right. We have not brought it on ourselves, but we have lost just the £— a year I reckoned on for the boys beginning life; but then see what good fellows they are. . . . Why, this is a sad thing perhaps, but it has its bright side for parents and children. . . .'

*To his Elder Daughter.*

'*Jan.* 7, 1888.

'Meet to-day at Mr. T.'s. The red coats keep flitting up and down the hill, and the time seems a long while off since I used to do the same thing. I wonder why certain classes of events are so much more remote than others, in our memory. Some things I did as a boy are still quite handy, others separated by an immeasurable distance.'

*To his Elder Daughter.*

'*Jany.* 25, 1888.

'Treat your dear little ones as if they were rather more delicate than perhaps they really are. Keep them in two or three days when they have colds, and don't imagine you can *harden* them off. I think I can hardly be accused of being an over-coddler, but I am sure young children cannot be treated too tenderly—not coddlingly. Give Johnny more of the cow and Mellin and less of Mamma.'

*Journal, January* 31, 1888.—'Thirteen navvies came to tea. Saw horns and heard stories.'

*February* 6, 1888.—'Horsey dying. William up and down the hill all day. Pixie dying too.'

Two days later the faithful, affectionate old servant and friend of twenty-five years passed away, and it was with a heavy heart that Oswell addressed himself that evening to the entertainment of a second gang of navvies.

William Horsey belonged to a type now rapidly dying out. Engaged as gardener in 1863, he became every year more devoted to the family and more identified with it. 'There ain't such a fam'ly as ours—no, not nowhere!' was a frequent boast of his; 'no, nor yet such a garden,' he generally added; and that he was largely responsible for both, and that they reflected equal credit on him, he

certainly believed. Very clever and very witty, he was respectfully familiar and jocose with every member of the household, from master to baby. Their concerns were of the deepest interest to him, their sayings and doings his favourite subject of conversation. He addressed the sons always as 'my man,' the daughters as 'my maid.' When the former brought home prizes from school, full satisfaction was not attained until he had gingerly but thoroughly examined them. 'By what I can make out,' he would then observe, with a triumphantly contemptuous smile, 'th' other young gen'l'men doänt seem o' much 'count 'longside o' ourn!'

In cricket, too, compared with them, the rest of the world was, in his opinion, equally at a discount. He knew no higher happiness than spending the day in watching every ball hit, bowled, or fielded by them, and, while punctuating the most ordinary deeds with sonorous 'Bee-utifuls!' he rewarded anything at all out of the way with thunderous applause, and treasured it up for subsequent boastful relation to those who had been so unfortunate as to be absent from the matches.

During his master's absences from Groombridge, the 'Gardener's Chronicles,' which came so regularly, were events to be looked forward to. The following extract is typical of his prose style and manner:

'. . . I were so sorrey to hear you are so Unwel for al the people in the villige Do miss you so mutch that it dont seeam like Groombridge without you. . . . We have the Orgin its like a little house bualt in the church and al the people think it a verrey nice one as for my part ilike the hotwater pipes the best for ifind them greut comfort for music dont warm me mutch. . . . idon't think thear is aney fresh at Groombridge only another Remnant born with my best wishes to all and happey new year to all.

'WILLIAM
'HORSEY Groombridge.'

But he was a poet as well. Thus, when Glas, the deerhound, died, he brought in an epitaph he had composed, which was afterwards duly inscribed on the headstone:

'PORE OLD GLASS!

In this grave there lys the Boddey of a Faithfull frend
he was belovd By Most of men
his Boddey in this Dust ive Layed
for Kindness to Him i allwys payd.'

And on Christmas Day, 1887, there appeared on the breakfast-table a monstrous quartern loaf, with a bunch of geraniums stuck in the top through a half-sheet of paper, on which was written:

'a good Sharpe nife and Carve it Wel
ithink this wil al Your Belleys Fill.

FROM WILLIAM AND MARY HORSEY.'

He was fond of giving presents, but to prevent jealousy they were generally of an inclusive nature. A fine old oak chest was 'for the fam'ly. I should like it called Horsey's Chest.' When he had routed a number of coins out of his treasures, 'so's noone shan't think I favoured one of ye mor'n another they'd best be named the chilrun's coins.'

As the 'chilrun' grew up he exercised himself considerably about their matrimonial prospects. 'Now, Mars' Willy, it's time you was lookin' out for a nice young lady with plenty of money, and soonsever you've got her, I'll come and keep your lodge gate for you, and look arter things.' When 'Miss Katie' became engaged to the Rev. Walter Raikes she took him to call on the old man. 'Well, Horsey,' said his master afterwards, 'what do you think of Mr. Raikes?' 'He'll do, sir, he'll do. I tells Miss Katie I'll give my consent free, and it ain't everyone I'd do the same for, I can tell ye!'

Year after year William Oswell and he worked, chatted,

and planned together in the garden. He became an integral part of the establishment, and knew it. 'We shall never replace him,' writes the former. 'He really loved us and ours, and no one will ever take such an interest in the garden again.'

For several years before his death he was pensioned off, his health preventing his working. As long, however, as he was able to crawl up the hill, he used, as he expressed it, to 'pook and doddle round,' and advise, criticise, and deplore, to the infinite chagrin of his successor, 'that there young Starchy,' as he opprobriously designated him, probably because he stood more upright than the ideal gardener should. "Starchy" had his revenge later, when Horsey was too ill to leave his cottage, by paying visits of condolence and describing in glowing terms the splendid progress of the garden under his beneficent and enlightened sway. One day Horsey was discovered in a state of indignant satisfaction. 'That there young Starchy happened along jes' now, and says he, "I be getting quite popilar with the family," he says. "*You* popilar!" I says. "Jes' you wait till you're laid up same as me, and see if they'll come fussin' in and out round you all day, and then you'll know whether you're popilar or not," I says. He couldn't think o' much to answer to that, couldn't Starchy.' He was wonderfully 'popilar' himself with the gentlefolks. Not a guest came to Hillside but struck up a friendship with him. Partly, no doubt, because of this, partly on account of his real and assumed intellectual superiority, he was not much liked by his own class. Possibly, too, the certificates of flower-show prizes with which the walls of his sitting-room were adorned were as vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes of less fortunate exhibitors.

Pixie died a day or two after Horsey. At ten o'clock at night she was in terrible pain. It was wild and stormy, but William Oswell could not bear to see her suffer, and running all the way to the doctor's—more than a mile,

and he was just seventy—he was back in an incredibly short time, with prussic acid. It was not used, for a few minutes after his return the little dog died. He spent an hour in helping to wash and comb her, and in lining a box in which she could lie, so as to make the sight of her less painful to his wife and daughter. 'Poor dear little Pixie's death has been a real sorrow to me and abideth,' he writes.

*To his Son-in-law and Elder Daughter.*

'*Feb.* 25, 1888.

'. . . I grieve with you, my dears, that dear little Johnny is so very poorly. . . . Linseed and warmth are the principal remedies with any little soothing medicines the doctor may have prescribed. Don't over-estimate the little dear's case. Babies come round to convalescence in a couple of hours, and although his cough is violent, and very painful to listen to, I gather that the little chap is fairly cheerful and not at all comatose, and takes his food too, which are all cheering signs. I do trust for an improved account to-morrow, and pray God for it. You know as well as I, if not better, the necessity of keeping the poultices *quite warm* with a piece of thin mackintosh or oiled silk, and two or three folds of flannel. When Johnny gets well, don't let him be put into his crib after he is washed and dressed, such weather as this, without being covered up warmly with his blankets whilst Nurse is tidying. Aunt Ellen came down here last night unexpectedly. . . . She looks well, and is cheery and bright as usual.'

He was devotedly attached to all his grandchildren, especially to the eldest, Sigrid, delighting in having them to stay with him, and interesting himself in anything concerning them, however trivial. The illness of

any one of them was always a signal to him to ease the parent's anxiety and his own, by a visit. A few lines to his eldest son explain what prevented his going on this occasion:

'*Feb.* 29, 1888.

'Your Aunt Ellen's visit has been a blessed one. She has cheered your Mother, and would have done ditto for me, but I am beyond being cheerful, from a baddish go of fever. . . . K.'s little son is better again, thank God. That rather worked on me, for I should have liked to go at once to Ide Hill; but just for *once* I wasn't fit for even that amount of journeying.

'I am glad you like Mrs. Hogge. Mr. and Mrs. Magniac, her Father and Mother, lived at Colworth, Beds, one of the pleasantest houses I ever visited. He was a most agreeable, genial, plucky man and I don't think I ever met such a woman as her Mother. Mrs. Hogge is clever, and very good. Her husband was Major Hogge, an excellent administrator in the Transvaal. I knew them both in Africa and she gave me an introduction to her family, who were most kind to me.'

*To his Elder Daughter.*

'*March* 29, 1888.

'. . . I lately came across the following, which expresses my own feelings; not that I ever steadily employed myself for the good of anyone, but it's just what ought to be:

'"*O vous qui vous occupez du bonheur des hommes, n'en attendez point de récompense pendant votre vie.*"

'I would even go farther—the pleasure of helping is an overflowing reward. . . . I was going to Ramsgate to Mary Cotton to see if I could be of any use. She seemed to expect me and I did not like to fail her. But when I went for a conveyance to the Wells, to catch the train, it

failed me, and so I am stranded for to-day. Helen was slowly dying last evening, without any hope. I could not have helped save in arranging funeral . . . but I am very sorry to have missed, as I had made up my mind it was right to go.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*April* 14, 1888.

'. . . Old Mrs. R. is dead at last, aged ninety-nine! a relief to all parties, for she was not a happy invalid—blind, deaf, and always under the impression that she was neglected. Miss R. must have had a hard task, but she has fulfilled it beautifully. Why are people allowed to fall away from their high estate and become so utterly changed? Mrs. R. was a delightful old lady when we first came here—but the soul seems to have grown old and crabbed before the body was worn out. The converse is common enough.

'H. K. is engaged to F. N. I hope they may soon get enough to live on, for I hate long engagements; they are deteriorating to man and woman. If one and one only made one, as we are told in matrimonial life they ought to do, it would be all right—but they sometimes make ten, twenty and even, in extreme cases, thirty-fold. Pray that you may not be blessed with thirty.'

*Journal, September* 19, 1888.—'Thirty-six members of the Tunbridge Wells Naturalist Society came. A number of visitors and our large house-party made a crowded gathering; but William's lecture was excellent, my tea highly appreciated, and all went well.'

*To his Sister-in-law, Miss Louisa Rivaz.*

'*September* 23, 1888.

'I rejoice you can give a cheery account of O. My love to her. You know I am at your disposition when

wanted, and that this is not a form of speech. With respect to what you tell me of Aunt M. it is sad no doubt, and very trying to all immediately around her; but at the end of life such trials to the patient soul do not, I think, wear the dark guise they put on to the young. Aunt M. is old and feeble, and must soon pass hence—thither; and if nearly painless, one or two steps further on the journey don't much matter—the goal is in view. You must not think me unfeeling. Were she a great sufferer I should grieve deeply that her short time here should be embittered. . . . My love to the good old lady, who bears her trial wondrously. God be with her to the end, and hereafter.

'Now I'm not much of a man for *indications*, but in the present case, and under the present circumstances, if your being at H. brings one ray of light or comfort to the house—as I am sure it does—your duty is clearly *indicated* —stay on. You are comfortable, and if by staying you make others happy, you are in good luck. You came for the sake of others, and have in the meantime reaped your own little harvest, for O. has been better off where she is than she would have been at home. You remember that this house is open to you at any time and always.'

*Journal, October* 1, 1888.—'William went to Kensington to see O. L., who has fever badly, and thence to C. to be present at consultation of doctors about T. He returned at nearly ten o'clock.'

*To his Sister-in-law, Miss Louisa Rivaz.*

'1, Maze Hill Tce.,
'St. Leonards,
'*Oct.* 23, 1888.

'Well! there are no doubt advantages in the new-fashioned weddings, but though one gets rid of the vapid speeches the whole thing lacks life—no breakfast; tea,

coffee, thin bread and butter and cake; a quarter of an hour's stuffing, and then about an hour and a half's dawdling about trying to find something to say to people who don't care to hear. Ladies stand the long days better than one would expect, but then criticism helps them, I am sure. . . .

'Alfred Wollaston and his wife have gone to London. I like her, she is so very brave and cheery, and he suits me wonderfully well.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Nov.* 21, 1888.

'We have had a Missioner at the new town to help Mr. X. drive the sheep to the fold. All a mistake as I take it. If Mr. X. had tried his best and visited his people and failed to make anything of them, a fresh hand might have been all very well. But he has done nothing of this, and tonics on an empty stomach induce depression. If the parish wouldn't have gone on, it might be all very well to light straw under its tail, but the experiment of soothing and leading was never tried. However, I am told the man was an excellent, earnest fellow; so much the worse for the parish and X. now the candle is gone out.'

*Journal, December* 12, 1888.—'William summoned to Ide Hill to see W., who was not at all well.'

*December* 27, 1888.—'William went to H. to my Aunt M.'s funeral.'

*December* 31, 1888.—'William again sent for to Ide Hill.'

On January 8, 1889, he was greatly shocked and grieved to hear of the sudden and unexpected death of his favourite sister-in-law, Juliet Rivaz. He at once journeyed to town to see if he could be of any use, and stopping at Edenbridge on his way home, walked the six miles up to Ide Hill, where his wife was staying, in order to comfort her and give her particulars.

*Journal, April* 22, 1889.—'Heard that my Aunt F. C., who is eighty-nine to-day, was very ill. William went to Hastings to see her.'

*April* 26, 1889.—'William visiting sick people all day.'

*May* 1, 1889.—'Little Spry [a dog] had a fit. William sat up with her far into the night, till she died.'

*May* 25, 1889.—'William, L. and I packed and started for Oxford to see H., but hearing at the station that Mr. Saint was not so well, William turned back and remained at home.'

*June* 5, 1889.—'William sent for at breakfast time; his old friend Mr. Saint dying all day. W. only came back at brief intervals, and finally stole home in the early dawn of the next day to say it was all over.'

*September* 18, 1889.—'A large party of us went to the Zoological Gardens, William, as usual, seeing us off from the station. Thinking I looked—I *was*—disappointed at his not accompanying us, he drove home as fast as he could go, to change his clothes, and came on by the next train, meeting us to our surprise and delight soon after our arrival.'

*October* 10, 1889.—'Directly after breakfast William and I, L. and W. started for Southampton to see F. off to the Argentine on the *Tamar*.'

As soon as he felt a sea-going ship under him the old longing to wander came again upon him strongly. 'If only you were a better sailor, and had no objection,' he exclaimed to his wife, 'I declare I would go with the boy—I could be ready to start to-morrow!'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Oct.* 18, 1889.

'Poor dear old Wanny has been presented with a purse —far below in amount what I hoped for—but still I hear he is pleased at people's stingy remembrance of him. I

wish we could have put two o o to the right hand of the figures of the sum we doled out, for I have a very affectionate recollection of the many kind visits he paid in the middle of the night and small hours, when you were all little, at old Florence. I used to ride Cicero down to him, often in the depth of winter, rouse him up from his warm nest, trot him over to Groombridge, our respective horses sliding and skating all over the road and into the ditches, and he ever cheery, good-humoured and uncomplaining. God bless him for his goodness and kindness. I wish I were a millionaire! We talk of a soldier being plucky, there's no one like a doctor who does his duty. The one gets honour or what he accepts as such; but the latter, as a matter of quiet, calm duty, incurs ten times greater risks in hospital and private practice, with much more discomfort, and never gains one word of applause.'

Wanny was the name given by Oswell's children to Mr. Wallis of Hartfield—the most kindly, gentle, courteous of doctors. His visits were always eagerly looked forward to by the whole family. The stethoscope in his big top-hat served the younger members for a trumpet many a time; his hunting-crop made an admirable horse, while the simultaneous possession of the three, with some imagination and his riding-gloves thrown in, conferred an M.R.C.S. degree. And when he rose to go, and discovered that his belongings had been transparently concealed in the hope of keeping him longer, he never failed to show exactly the bewilderment and astonishment expected of him, and exactly the relief and satisfaction on their restoration. Dear kind Wanny! He liked his tea sweet, but the reiterated 'one more lump please' and the resulting syrup were undoubtedly sacrifices to the wishes of his little friends. He was too generous ever to become rich, and the purse spoken of was a testimonial on his retirement from practice.

*Journal, October* 31, 1889.—'No touch of frost yet. Lobelias, dahlias, mignonette, sweet peas, all blooming luxuriantly; the chrysanthemums a blaze of colour. William's pride in his flowers is good to see.'

*November* 11, 1889.—'Lewin Hill came. Kind, bright and intelligent as ever.'

Oswell always found great pleasure in the visits of this old friend of his wife's, and listened with the more interest and attention to his shrewd views of men, books and things for the simplicity and entire lack of assumption with which they were enunciated.

*Journal, November* 28, 1889.—'William went off to obtain legal advice on behalf of a poor old clergyman, with the view of preventing his son possessing himself of and selling the property, as he tried hard to do, during the temporary insanity of his father.'

Writing at this time to one of his servants who was nursing her mother through her last illness, Oswell ends the letter: 'And now be quite open with me. Your expenses must have been great; are you in need of ready money? I ask you as one I have long known and respected, and if you need help, and will allow me, I should much like to give it you.'

*Journal, January* 7, 1890.—'William went to Cowley Street to be with my sister K. on the anniversary of Julie's death.'

*January* 9, 1890.—'William went round the village to find what poor people needed help.'

## CHAPTER XXI.

1890–1892. AGE 72–74.

Sir Samuel Baker—For Livingstone's sake—Delight in garden —'It's 'is 'obby'—'The most enthusiastic welcome' at Sandford Orleigh—A noble-looking, splendid-charactered old lady—Dean Cowley Powles—'The pleasantest seaside town I know'—Things never so bright as hoped for—Vicarious sacrifice not fair to victim—Aptitude for language—Master and servant; give and take, and no worry —Letter from Baker; 'buy a ream of foolscap, a box of J pens and a gallon of ink, and write a book'—Lowering franchise undue influence to masses—Sir Harry Johnston —The Stanley Expedition—The submerged tenth—Riding friends' horses—Missing the dead—Mr. Webb of Newstead—Johnston's 'Life of Livingstone and the Exploration of Central Africa'—Suggested article in 'Badminton' Series—Baker's advice and encouragement—Mr. Rudston-Read—Letter from a schoolfellow of sixty years previously —Kind to the Devil—Baker withdraws his article—Correspondence with him—Oswell's views on Mashonaland, slave-trade and Boers—An extract from Livingstone's Journal.

In earlier days Oswell had seen much of Sir Samuel Baker, and they had since carried on an intermittent correspondence and contrived occasional meetings. The interests and characters of the two men were in many respects wonderfully similar, their views of sport identical. A very hearty friendship existed between them, which long separations and intervals of silence did not lessen.

From this date to that of Oswell's death they wrote frequently to one another, and Oswell kept many of Baker's letters, their warm-heartedness, *verve* and generosity appealing to him strongly.

*Sir Samuel White Baker to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'SANDFORD ORLEIGH,
'NEWTON ABBOT,
'*Feb.* 10, 1890.

'MY DEAR OSWELL,

'How the years fly! It seems so short a time ago when I look back, but yet how long an interval has really passed since we last met. . . . So very many friends are dead that those who are left should be all the more appreciated. . . . When your children were young, I remember you would never move far away, but now they must be grown up, and you and Mrs. Oswell must be free. My wife and I want you to promise to give us the immense pleasure of a visit here when the country puts on the youthful dress of early June. Our neighbourhood is very lovely and you would receive the most enthusiastic welcome. . . . I often look back to the Purdey No. 10 you kindly lent me in 1861, and as a killer nothing can beat it at 80 yards. . . . My house is choke-full of heads, but the Africans are miserable compared with yours, as all North of the Equator are quite insignificant compared with the same species, South. We are booked for India

SIR SAMUEL BAKER.

24th October, but I shall never see Nepaul, where I had hoped to shoot this year. The game has been shot down to such an extent that three years' rest are to be given, and all shooting is prohibited. I shall accordingly go to a place that I know, and devote myself wholly to tigers, and enjoy the camp life with some of my old servants and people who, I believe, are expecting me. I wish you could manage to come also. I forget when you came into the world. My parents introduced me in 1821—this month—and I wish they had deferred the event for at least 50 years!'

*W. Cotton Oswell to Sir S. W. Baker.*

'*Feb.* 1890.

'. . . I shall be delighted to welcome your new book. You are the only one of the old Africans who has the gift of writing readably, and making people understand what you have seen by word of mouth or by letterpress. Otherwise we are a dull lot. . . . As someone truly said, Speke was named *a non spekendo;* so I think most ancient Africans are dumb, and suffer from *chiragra* in their writing. You have read Professor Drummond's book, no doubt—very clever, but very sketchy. Stanley will have plenty to say and will be quite sure to say it—two or three times over! I don't love the man at all, but he is, most undoubtedly, a plucky leader of men.

'Livingstone's last son is dead and his widow left very badly off. Her friends are thinking of making an application for the continuance of the Government Annuity granted to her late husband as the Doctor's son, and want the application backed by Africans. Would you mind signing? I don't think you knew much of Livingstone, but the world knows a good deal about *you,* and "Samuel Baker" would weigh ever so much; and if that paragon of lady travellers would help it with her sign manual, we should win the day and upset the Government! . . .

My—*our* very kindest regards to Lady Baker and yourself. . . .'

*Journal, March* 12, 1890.—'William greatly interested in the trenching of his flower-beds. He works indefatigably and most ably in his garden.'

No mere incidental allusion can give any idea of the interest and pleasure he took in his garden. He was constantly planning new effects, and after poring over nurserymen's catalogues as he sat smoking at night, sending his orders—very moderate orders—for he regarded money so spent to some extent as a personal gratification. He specially, and with signal success, addressed himself to the cultivation of herbaceous plants, and rejoiced in supplying the whole neighbourhood with hampers of roots and cuttings. Each year a fresh flower took the lead. Delphiniums, pyrethrums, sweet-williams, phloxes, harpaliums, pinks and carnations, lobelia cardinalis and Queen Victoria, lilies, Shirley and other poppies, roses, and many more, had their turn, and dropped into second place. It was his pride that, as fast as one variety finished blooming, there should be another to succeed it, and from January to December there was always a supply. He did most of the bedding out, and all the watering, sticking, pruning and collecting of seeds; he weeded and raked every bed, and, indeed, save for the actual digging, kept the whole flower-garden himself. He was always anxious for suggestions and advice, and as long as his children can remember it was a frequent practice with him to walk or drive through Hollamby's nurseries and chat with the civil, obliging managers. Conscious of the immense pains he bestowed, he appreciated a compliment on his garden. The best, he used to say, he ever received was from a coachman.

The carriage and pair of a friend drove up one day, and the footman. in accordance with a well-established usage in such circles, descended languidly from the box and

sauntered superciliously round to the stables. 'Not much class,' he announced, with some disgust, on his return. 'I s'pose Oswell's hard up.' 'Not 'im,' replied the better-informed coachman; ''e's got plenty of money, but 'e spends it on 'is garding; it's 'is 'obby. Keeps eight gardeners 'e does, and 'im always at it 'isself; so it ain't to be wondered at that 'e makes the show 'e does!'

*Journal, May* 11, 1890.—'William made poor old Mrs. W.'s will for her. Next day he and I drove to the village to see her set off for East Grinstead Union. She was content to go. I gave her our likenesses. William carried her out to the fly we had provided for her.'

*May* 14, 1890.—'The little Raikeses came. William helped to make a garden for them by sticking the blossoms of flowers into the ground. He enjoyed their delight as if he were one of them himself. What a merry party it was!'

In July he and his wife went to stay with the Bakers, receiving, as they had been promised, 'the most enthusiastic welcome.'

'We were quite bewildered,' writes Mrs. Oswell, 'by the vast amount of curiosities, skins, lovely products from Japan, Ceylon, China, *everywhere*, that adorn this pretty place almost too abundantly. . . . Sir Samuel is a most interesting and genial companion, his conversation strikingly good. . . . I return with a grateful sense of the friendship of my husband's old friends, and the general pleasantness of the little trip.'

*Sir Samuel W. Baker to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'Sandford Orleigh,
'Newton Abbot,
'*August* 6, 1890.

'It was very good of you and Mrs. Oswell to write us such charming letters. I cannot tell you how we missed

you after your departure. The house felt very dull; we should have welcomed the Guwyas Kokus, in spite of the rattling of its chains, to spur us from our melancholy! . . . It does not pay to reflect, but the years do pass away more quickly than when we were in our teens. It is a pleasure to see friends of our younger days running in couples with us along the road of life and defying the old tyrant of decay. I wish you could be with us in India. Nothing brings one back to early days so much as sport, and with you as my companion I should not believe in age. I shall write to you if there is anything worth relating. My wife sends all kinds of warm messages to Mrs. Oswell and yourself, and she joins me in regretting that your visit to us has passed; it was a true pleasure to us both to renew old times and friendship.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Second Son.*

'GROOMBRIDGE,
'*Aug.* 6, 1890.

'. . . Baker is an excellent host with abundance to say and plenty of words and humour. Lady Baker too, though a foreigner, has fallen into English ways, speaks the language beautifully and acts her part to perfection. On leaving Sandford Orleigh, I took the Mother to Torquay for a day or two, just to show her the pretty country and to visit my Mother's grave, which is in old Tor churchyard. I found it in fair order I am glad to say, and the house in which she died, 6 Higher Terrace, looked bright and smiling as if nothing sad had ever happened in it. I should like you children to have seen your grandmother, it would have been a pleasant memory, for she was a noble-looking, splendid-charactered old lady. It's no use my asking God to bless her, for I know He has. . . . Your Mother has laid out another honeymooning trip to St. Leonards. . . . I shall probably take her on

thence to Chichester for a day, to see the cathedral and leave our cards on Bishop Durnford and his Dean, Cowley Powles, who was an old schoolfellow of mine before I went to Rugby, and was accustomed very benignly to do my Latin themes and verses in consideration of a certain amount of protection afforded him by my muscles, which were superior, though my brain was far inferior to his. I still remember some of the lines, or parts of the lines, of one of the chapters of the Ephesians, I think, which for my sins, and for punching another fellow's head, I had to put into hexameters and pentameters. I shall like to see the little man again, though it is sixty-three years since last we met; and then, little idiot that I was, it was supposed I was quite up to reading Theocritus, Hesiod *and* Pindar! Oh dear! we scrambled up in those days higher than we could really get in all our after life. . . .'

*To his Elder Daughter.*

'1, Maze Hill Terrace,
'St. Leonards-on-Sea,
'*Aug.* 8, 1890.

'This is the pleasantest seaside town I know, clean and fresh. It is a pity it does not suit you or W., because for six months of the year the little house would be at your disposal gratis. We came here last night for a few days, and as we sent Isabella before, found everything most bright and tidy. . . . Our visit to Sir S. Baker's was very pleasant. . . . They were really affectionately kind and hospitable.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Aug.* 19, 1890.

'Do you remember Knowles—a friend of Harry's at Christchurch—a very nice young fellow indeed? He has just been drowned whilst out fishing. . . . "If there

should be a sphere where all is put right which so puzzles us here," we shall know perhaps why one is taken and another left. I cannot abide the idea that a fine young life is taken just for the sake of a warning, or for the improvement of other people. This kind of vicarious sacrifice doesn't seem quite fair on the victim.'

*To his Elder Daughter.*

'*Sept.* 8, 1890.

'. . . Looking at my own experience of life I have never found things quite so bright as one hoped for. There is always a something which is wanting, or in the wrong place. But I have long ago tried to ignore this, and, by degrees, I think I am succeeding. I blow off the steam of disappointment for a second or two, and then, so far as I can, dismiss the disagreeableness from my mind. Try this plan, and when anything is good or well done, rejoice in it, and if it be on the books, give thanks to the doer. I look upon my garden as a failure in great part; but, if I live, I hope to have it more effective next year. If everything were arrived at at once, what would be the pleasure in gardening? . . . I want to run down and look at Veitch's foliage shrubs and the plantation by Surbiton. I am more and more persuaded that foliage mixed with flowers is the true thing.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Sept.* 15, 1890.

'Do you speak Spanish fairly yet? I always regret, amongst other neglected opportunities of my life, that I never studied languages when I had the opportunity. Indian I had to master some way or somehow, but of European, except the merest smattering, I have no knowledge. From day to day we don't appreciate rightly the

way we are wasting our lives, but now that I look back from the station before the terminus, I can see pretty clearly what a much better journey I ought to have made of it—and even now sometimes I can hardly realize how near the end of it I must be and what a very little time is left to do anything in. As one gets older one's mind is more occupied with the mistakes and feebleness of one's past life—natural enough—when you can *do* very little you think of what you *might* have done. I hope I may some day be given another chance with my present recollections (though I can't find any warrant for the hope), and in the meantime wake up to do a little while it is yet twilight and before the night cometh. Unfortunately now I do not see the openings for good, for my eyes are dimmed and my hands weakened for real work. May I be granted strength to meet the little daily occurrences better than I have hitherto done.'

His aptitude and instinct for language were very remarkable. His delight in Latin and Greek and his excellence as a classical scholar have already been referred to. But, in addition, he possessed a fair knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, spoke and wrote Hindustani easily, and understood, and could make himself understood in, several of the African dialects, including the curious, clicking Bush. How complete was his mastery of Tamil the following anecdote will show. He was introduced at a party to an Indian gentleman, who was, it soon appeared, familiar with every town and village in the Madras Presidency which he had formerly known, and they were soon engaged in an animated conversation. The Indian helped himself out in a description with a few words of Tamil. Oswell responded in the same language. For the next hour not a word of English passed between them. When they parted the Indian went up to a mutual friend and said: 'I have lived a good many years now, and heard a great many foreigners speak my language more or

less well, but I never in my life heard it spoken as by the man who has just left the room. Not only is he accurate in idiom, but his voice inflections are perfect. I have been talking to him as an Indian to an Indian, and not once was I reminded that he is an Englishman.' And it was forty years since Oswell left India!

He spoke Cape Dutch fluently, and in this connection was fond of telling a story against himself. At a large dinner-party he was placed by his hostess between two young Dutch ladies who knew no English. He found them pleasant companions, and they manifested great interest in his tales of Africa. But he could not help noticing smiles constantly flitting over their faces without, as he thought, adequate grounds. At last he inquired the cause of their merriment. 'Pray forgive us,' they replied; 'we must seem so rude, but you are talking just exactly like papa's grooms!'

When his second son went to the Argentine he had a large number of men under him, and wrote from time to time to his father as to their management. The advice given—the fruit of a long experience—is interesting as illustrating the practice of one whose numerous dependents, black and white, without a single exception, loved, feared, respected, and worked for him to an extraordinary degree:

'If you would get on comfortably with those under you, it must be a matter of give and take within limits, *and above all no worry*. To be not content with giving an order, but to show how to execute it, spoils a good servant and riles a bad one. . . . Say what you wish done, and don't interfere with the doing of it. Make your own comments afterwards if it is done ill or wrongly, but be very sparing of finding fault on insufficient grounds. When there is sufficient reason, in your own opinion (not in other people's) speak clearly, decidedly and shortly, and have done with it; and then if things don't mend according to

your wishes and you believe the faults are intentional, change your "help." . . . Pitch into your servants, if you must, sometimes, but occasionally scratch their heads. I know I am considered generally a very bad type of master because I do not find fault enough and am too easy. But, bless you! I see the mistakes, but an occasional row is all I can make my mind up to—the constant snarling is beyond me. And then perhaps I am too lax—granted; but as one grows old the importance of trifles seems to lessen, and for quiet I perhaps overlook too much. But it's a fault, I think, on the right side.'

Since their first meeting, it had always been his wife's most cherished wish that he should publish some of his many experiences. She succeeded with great difficulty in inducing him to write to Murray to inquire as to the prospects of such a book; but reminiscences and Africa were not then by any means the fashion they are now, and illustration was far more costly. Murray duly pointed this out, and intimated that the initial outlay must be considerable. The idea of spending anything at all on what as being his own work he considered must be practically worthless, was extremely distasteful to him; that he should thus throw away a *large* sum, an actual impossibility; and, in spite of strong pressure, he abandoned the idea. From time to time it was revived, and, to please his wife, he dictated to her a number of stories. It was, however, reserved for his friend Baker to break down the resolution of a lifetime, and dispose finally, though by slow degress, of all the excuses and scruples suggested by a too profound diffidence. During the visit to Sandford Orleigh he began the attack, and in every letter afterwards he returned to the charge. Thus, writing on October 9, 1890, he says:

'We leave Marseilles 25th November per *Arcadia* P. and O.—the same ship that took us our last voyage to

Bombay. As the winter is drawing near I want you to set to work. Buy a ream of foolscap, a box of J pens, a gallon of ink, and amuse yourself by writing a book of your experiences. The illustrations which you already possess will be admirable and will save much expense. If you write a book and let Macmillan and Co. publish it, you will make a very pretty sum, at the same time that you will afford much pleasure to your readers. It will be very refreshing to get a dependable book on South Africa as it was in the early days, before the wave of emigration carried all the animals before it, and drove the survivors into remote and still unknown regions. A work from you would have a very extensive sale not only here, but also in America, and your experiences would cast all others into the shade. We shall expect to have the great pleasure of seeing you and Mrs. Oswell again next summer.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Second Son.*

'*Nov.*, 1890.

'If one may judge of the result of the general election next year by the side issues, the G.O.M. will have a good chance of coming in with a large majority. This broadcast distribution of votes has given an undue influence, as I think, to the uneducated masses, who expect benefit from every change and are naturally therefore Radical, and anxious for an innings. They will, I believe, have it one day, though it remains to be proved how they will score. . . . In the general scramble, may you get your share. I shall be away before it comes and shall be glad to be out of it, but it will be the beginning of the end, in my opinion. I see the favourite theory of mine, that the world is getting too strait for its inhabitants and that the end of the æon is presaged by this fact, was taken up very seriously at the British Association this

year. Another two hundred million . . . and you're full up! men can't live where cereals can't be grown, and the cultivable land is getting short. . . .'

*To his Eldest Son.*

'*Nov.* 20, 1890.

'I had a pleasant chat yesterday with Mr. Johnston* at Queen Anne's Mansions. I think you were here when he came to call with the Rendels. He is a very intelligent little fellow, has been Consul at Mozambique, and acted as chief in African delimitation as between Prussia, Portugal and England, and will now most probably get a settled, or rather roving post as Inspector to see that the boundaries are not infringed.'

*To his Youngest Son.*

'1890.

'They are making too much fuss about Stanley. . . . He is a plucky fellow no doubt and has done his work, but . . . he has seized provisions and shot down the owners occasionally when they refused to sell, or resisted. As if an African ever grew more than sufficient for his own consumption! so selling meant starving. . . . Do you see the signs of coming war in the . . . heaven? Major Barttelot is to the fore and Troupe and Bonny will probably be anon, and . . . H. M. S. may find the truth of the old singsong, *Non per "sylvas" sed per castra nobis iter est ad astra.*'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Dec.* 10, 1890.

'The Stanley expedition are quarrelling prettily amongst themselves, and Mr. Stanley's true character seems hardly

* Now Sir H. H. Johnston.

likely to come out in such bright colours as it was painted in at the first by an idolatrous English public. All those who have as yet spoken are rather down on him. What I contend against is the statement that his journey has opened out Africa—fudge! it has done more to shut it up than anything that has ever occurred. It may have been necessary to force his way that his object might be gained, but a *forced* way soon closes up again, and the next traveller will find ill-will and hostility along the whole path, and for all useful purposes it is closed to a peaceful *trajet* for thirty or forty years. The hate must die out before anyone else can traverse it without two hundred muskets. . . . Barttelot and Jamieson acted, no doubt, very badly, but in his book Stanley ought either to have spoken clearly of their misdeeds or ignored them altogether, instead of working by innuendo and pretending their acts were worse even than he suggested, and that out of kindness and decency he withheld the worst. The whole expedition has been a disgrace. . . .

'General Booth's (the Salvationist's) scheme for universal lifting up and improving what he calls the "submerged tenth" is very much talked about in these days. Numbers have subscribed largely to it, nearly £100,000, and I suppose it will be tried. On a moderate, manageable scale I have no doubt it might work well. I have read his book. But people hardly I think consider the ratio at which difficulties increase as the size of a system of charity is increased. It is much too long to discuss now, but if you see the book, look it through; it (especially the first part) is well put and written. General Booth is a great organiser but he is mortal—and, after him, what security?'

*Journal, February* 7, 1891.—'Poor Mrs. S. in chopping wood cut her thumb nearly off. She sent of course for William, who bound it up until the Doctor came. He did not get home till after midnight.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Feb.* 15, 1891.

'. . . I have just met Captain H. going home in great tribulation. Mr. F. W. had given him a mount on a good-looking hunter and the animal had come down with him on a newly-metalled road, and cut both knees badly. The poor young fellow is heartbroken about it, but I hope I have persuaded him that as a nearly general rule you don't *throw* horses down—they *come* down of themselves, irrespective of you; and that his grief will only hurt Mr. W., for he will feel more for the rider than for the horse, knowing how annoyed one is at such an accident. I told him how I cut off nearly half the foot of Leicester Curzon's (Lord Howe's son) very best hunter, in the Crimea—coming through the French lines, at the extreme end of the besieging batteries it put its foot upon a broken bottle—and how indifferent Curzon was to everything save my distress. I hope I helped him a little, poor lad, but it is a nuisance. *Moral*—never ride the horse of a friend if you think he will care for your breaking its knees or its neck.'

*Journal, February* 28, 1891.—'A great party of the "Leopard" boys. William entertained them. For a long time frequent small relays of them (from the Skinners' School) came to see the horns and pictures, *fascinated* by the showman! We were obliged to say they must come in large detachments.'

Hearing of the serious illness of his old friend Mr. James Macleay, Oswell wrote asking whether he would be admitted if he went up to town to call. Mr. Macleay himself replied:

'*March* 14, 1891.

'My dear Friend,

'God bless you for your most kind letter received this morning, of which I feel I am altogether undeserving.

. . . I have been *very* ill. . . . Should you be in London I hope you will come and see me. I see very few people now, but am always at home to *you*, and my servants have orders to admit you at *any* time. . . . You must not speak of any kindness received from my poor wife or my unworthy self, because we always thought the kindness was on your part, and I assure you, my dear, good friend, I think so still. . . . May God bless you, my dear Fellow, and with love to yourself

'Believe me always

'Very affectionately yours.'

*Journal, April* 16, 1891.—'William telegraphed for to go to Bath to see O. and L. He left by the next train and brought them up to town on the following day.'

*April* 28, 1891.—'All to Idé Hill. My dear husband a child among the children.'

*May* 5, 1891.—'William went to London to see a dying friend and thence to Shortlands to bid God-speed to our nephew W. L. and his wife before they set sail for India.'

*May* 10, 1891.—'William went to town to be present at an operation.'

*May* 12, 1891.—'William returned from town to go to the funeral of one of our poor neighbours.'

*May* 29, 1891.—'William in bed all day with a sharp attack of fever.'

*May* 30, 1891.—'William left his bed to go with me to London to my sister O., who is dying.'

*To his Second Son.*

'*July* 9, 1891.

'. . . The world rolls on much as it did before without dear Aunt O.—and this is as it should be, no doubt, but it always strikes me as a very wonderful and rather sad thing that the gaps of death are so soon filled up. Real, strong missing hardly gets beyond parent and child,

husband and wife; and if we are sentient in our midway state, it must occur to a good many of us that our arrows have not made much mark through the yielding air, which has closed up so fast behind them that a week after the last, none could point out the line any one of them has taken. It is merciful that the dead should be forgotten in part, but wonderful that they should as a rule pass so entirely out of mind and daily life. I suppose we rank our own importance too highly and do not refer our impressions of others to those of others for us. The loss of some is ever with us or very near, but many of our kindly acquaintances, though quite truly regretted, are, I think, more remembered by their little peculiarities than their good deeds; but perhaps I am wrong. I only know that no one—acquaintance or friend—ever dies without my reproaching myself that I have not shewn them more special attention or love than I have whilst they were alive. I hope no one may suffer an hour's sadness when I go, but still I am human enough to feel I should just like to be missed sometimes, and wise enough to know that I shan't be, at least for any good done, for evil and wasted have been the days of my pilgrimage, but *sat.* I think you knew Mr. Webb of Newstead Abbey, an old African acquaintance of mine. His third child has succumbed under chloroform. I hardly dare write to him, but think I must do so, for although words may not lighten burdens, when one gets old, and Webb is within a few years of me, one likes to know that the friends who knew you at your best have not forgotten.'

*Journal, July* 16, 1891.—'The de Navarros called. William is greatly charmed with them, as indeed we all are.'

*July* 18, 1891.—'Prepared the rooms for 59 expected guests—school teachers—William addressed them better than ever.'

*September* 11, 1891.—'William went to London to help L. plant flowers on O.'s grave.'

*September* 14, 1891.—'William and I called on Mrs. and Miss Pharazyn—a new interest in our lives—they are such nice people.'

*September* 15, 1891.—'William took W. R. to Hastings to see the cricket match. His interest in this game is as keen as if he were a boy.'

*September* 19, 1891.—'William summoned early to the deathbed of poor T. F., the consumptive lad who has been our care for so long. T. recognised him, and died whilst he was there.'

*October* 7, 1891.—'William went to see K., walking fifteen miles, and returned not in the least tired.'

On the publication of 'Livingstone and the Exploration of Central Africa' Oswell received two copies, one from the author, the other from his faithful friend Mrs. Bruce. He thus acknowledges the latter:

'*October*, 1891.

'I received a presentation copy of Mr. Johnston's Life of your dear Father, forwarded from the publishers at your request some days ago, and should have acknowledged your kind thought of me at once, but before doing so I decided to look into the book and ascertain the impression it conveyed to my mind. I have not as yet really read it, but skimmed it, and it would be premature to say much decidedly. Mr. Johnston is a clever little fellow and well able to form a correct opinion from his own knowledge of the Doctor's work, and the reports, information and reminiscences of his friends, but all accounts written from hearsay, miss very salient points in men's lives and characters—things that are the outcome, only occasionally, of very persistent characteristics of the subject of the Memoir. For instance, no account I have ever come across of your Father makes half enough of the curious persistent sticking to his line of action—a most valuable trait in his nature for the work he had to do, and did. If

he hadn't been a Scotchman one might have sometimes called it obstinacy, but with the man it was more a very quiet, dogged persistency—unwilling to render any explanation of how and why, but still quite clearly defined in his inner man. However, as I have said, I have not fully read Johnston's book, and my remarks would not be worth much if I had. And now how are you all? What *all* means I do not quite know, but I hear you have a good husband, and little children, and long may you be spared to one another. I am very sorry for my sake that we live so far apart. I should like to see you and yours; and as long as I am spared under the moon am not likely to forget you or your Father and Mother or the dear old forebears at Kuruman. . . . God bless you all.'

In October, 1891, Messrs. Longman invited Sir Samuel Baker to contribute an article on African Big Game to a forthcoming volume of the 'Badminton' Series. With characteristic perspicacity and adroitness, he saw and seized the opportunity of carrying the point he had so persistently urged, and at once wrote to Oswell:

'*October* 11, 1891.

'. . . I want to talk over a lot of things with you—one of these subjects you will understand by the enclosed. I have written this post to Longman to suggest that *you* are the great and only living authority upon South Africa, where I never fired a shot. If you would take South Africa I would take Central Africa and Abyssinia and we could then make a really dependable addition to the "Big Game" for the "Badminton Library."'

Oswell tried at first to escape compliance by declaring that Mr. Longman would certainly not care for a contributor of whose very name as an African traveller he must, in common with the rest of the world, be ignorant;

and that there were plenty of men whose experiences would be better worth relating. Baker met these objections:

'*Oct.* 23, 1891.

'. . . Mr. Longman has more than once referred directly to yourself as a wished-for contributor to the "Badminton Library" upon Big Game in Africa. You really ought to do something, as your experiences are far beyond those of anyone now living. Lord R. Churchill's letters to the *Graphic* (highly amusing as they are to experienced men) have awakened a taste among the public for that kind of sport. The South African lions and the game which existed in such numbers in your time can only be properly described by yourself. Your old No. 10 gun is well worthy of the pages of the "Badminton Library." . . . Do you mind writing *one* story first? . . . Don't let me bother you, but knowing as I do all that you have achieved in the grand old days, I hate the names of others paraded who have done literally nothing compared with yourself. The "Badminton Library" will remain a standard work, therefore it is exactly in it that your name would be appreciated. . . .'

Driven from one position, William Oswell took up another—his entire lack of literary experience and ability. Baker dislodged him from this:

'*Oct.* 31, 1891.

'I feel sure you would *write* admirably as you *talk* so well. Many people lack the graphic power of description, which sadly mars their conversation, but you can describe all your scenes so admirably *vivâ voce*, that I feel sure you could write them with the same flowing spirit. . . . I will not dwell too much on the animals that you will describe, and I will confer with you upon the matter from time to time.'

A day or two later a letter came from Mr. Longman indorsing all that Sir Samuel Baker had said, and at last he yielded.

*Sir S. W. Baker to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'*Nov.* 5, 1891.

'. . . Longman has sent me your letter to him, which is too modest by half, just like you! I know you won't be offended at my presuming to suggest a few headings annexed, the line that you might take up so admirably. . . . Now that the white rhinoceros is becoming so rare, who is to write upon him except yourself? If I were you I would write just as though you were addressing a friend in a series of letters. Something in this style for the beginning.' *Here follows a long excursus, and the letter concludes:*

'If you commence something in that way it will at once lead you into the scenes which will be called up like magic to your memory, and you will rattle away in capital style directly you get into the humour.'

Towards the middle of November Oswell began to write. Once started, he found Baker's prediction more than verified. All the incidents, adventures, and even the petty details, of his life in Africa crowded into his mind, and it was peculiarly irksome to him to confine himself strictly within the limits laid down by editor and publisher, to quarry the stories of big game clean and clear out of the matrix of hill, plain, bird, insect, tree, in which they were embedded in his recollection. He conscientiously tried to do so, however, and at the close of each day sheared away much interesting matter that was under the circumstances irrelevant. In a single instance he refused to yield. It was pointed out to him that the account of his faithful servant John was a mere excrescence,

and he was urged to excise it. He replied that he was perfectly willing to withdraw the entire article, but that if the 'Badminton' Series wished to secure it, he must make the inclusion of this story a *sine quâ non*. He had his way, and introduced it with the following explanation and apology:

'It is no story of big game and perhaps ought not to find a place in these pages; but it is so bound up with all my shooting, all my pleasure in Africa, that I would ask to be forgiven for telling it. I should feel a traitor to the memory of a dead friend if I did not.'

Rapidly, easily, forcibly, picturesquely as he wrote, he had the very lowest opinion of his work. Throughout his life he sincerely believed that he absolutely lacked the power of expressing himself on paper, and that his letters were invariably dull and awkwardly phrased. 'I once could *do* what I wanted, but I never could *write* what I wished,' he says in one of them.

Soon after beginning the article he remarks in a letter to his eldest son:

'It seems impossible to gauge the worth or worthlessness of a thing in MS.—at least to me; but when I look at other people's books, my writing appears so meagre and feeble—though I know the facts themselves are nearly unique.'

And later, when the proofs were before him:

'I read a few pages of my article the other night to see how it struck me, and I must say a worse piece of muddled, ill-constructed work I never got hold of; the baldness of the whole thing, and the way the stories are lugged in, is shocking to me!'

*Sir S. W. Baker to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'. . . I send you the rough proofs of the section I have written. As you will see, I have said little or nothing about the Antelopes, as I leave it to you to tell the glorious tales of the millions which existed in the good old days—your description would be twenty times more interesting than anything I could write. I also say very little about Lions, as you have such first-class experiences of them, or about Rhinoceros, as you have three varieties to describe. . . . I think it unwise of Major Percy to give excessive lengths for Tigers—all from hearsay evidence—13 feet ! ! ! —12 feet not very uncommon ! ! I never saw a tiger longer than 9 feet 8 inches fair measurement. The "Badminton Library" should be a book of undoubted reference. My wife joins me in warm regards to Mrs. Oswell and yourself. . . .

'Ever, my dear Oswell,

'Most sincerely yours.'

*Journal, November* 18, 1891.—'William went to start K. and her large following to Monte Carlo. He travelled down with them from Sevenoaks to Dover and saw them comfortably disposed on the packet.'

*January* 16, 1892.—'L. ill with influenza. William helped to nurse her, sitting up sometimes half the night, and reading light books aloud to her constantly, until the end of the month. Was there ever such a help and comfort in sickness !'

In the next few weeks eighteen deaths occurred in his immediate circle, and he went to most of the funerals, among them to that of his good friend and neighbour Mr. Rudston-Read, the Rector of Withyham, of whom he writes:

'They'll never again have such a fine old generous fellow as Mr. Read—bluff, hearty, liberal and most friendly of

men. I'm afraid his liberality may have injured the parish for his successor, but I love him all the better for it.'

Fearing that more of his old friends and acquaintances might pass away without greeting from him, he went up to town and paid visits to nearly twenty of them.

'I cannot believe,' writes John V. C. Rivaz to his sister, Mrs. Oswell, after seeing him, 'that your good lord and master is all but seventy-four. Anyhow, I thoroughly agree with our father's verdict that he is a very prince among men. I know that there is no one living for whom I would sacrifice more, and for whom I have a higher affectionate respect.'

To many others living abroad or at a distance he sent letters. The reply of a schoolfellow whom he had not met, and of whom he had heard nothing for over sixty years, is an evidence of the extraordinary power he possessed, even in his boyhood, of inspiring a lasting affection:

*G. M. B. Berford to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'San Remo,
'*March*, 1892.

'If I were to tell you how delighted I was last night when I received your note, you would mentally ejaculate "What a humbug this fellow is" or "What a gushing old creature he has become." So, like the lady in "Locksley Hall," I will "hide my feelings, fearing they may do me wrong." That I should remember *you* is not wonderful, but I am equally astonished and pleased to learn that you have any recollection of *me*. I can perfectly recall what a

sickly, puny, timid, insignificant lad I was in those long-past days; I had never before been to any school, and I gratefully remember that you sometimes stood between me and the oppressor. In those days "all the current of my being set to thee." It was a case of uncouth Orson and splendid young Valentine. I believed you to be the handsomest, bravest, most generous of created boys. (Perhaps I was not much mistaken?) Be that as it may, you were my superb young hero, and I have never forgotten you, and often wished to see you again. I was in the North-West Provinces, and you, I think, in Madras, so I had no chance of meeting you. Then you left the service, and I was told became a mighty hunter before the Lord, and were with Livingstone in Africa. So, truly you were lost to sight though dear to memory. Once only, I nearly swooped down upon you, in Paris—Heaven knows how long ago. You may possibly remember an old Irish clergyman, staying at Meurice's—who spoke much of you to me. He was neither very wise nor witty, but he pleased everyone by a natural amenity of temper and manners. You may remember that George Hudson, the *ex*-Railway King, was there, and the *ex*-Hospodar of Wallachia, and these "celebrities" took amazingly to the old priest—as did many others. What is the title of the book of Tom Hughes in which there is a notice of your Rugby life? Kindly write it on a postcard, that I may hasten to possess myself of it. . . . I see with my mind's eye Denzil Newman, with his yellow hair parted in the centre, Powell, the Huths, Raffaële and Ramon Florez, Cotton, Sieveking and many others. I once dined with Cowley Powles at Blackheath where he kept a very large school of a superior class. Most of these are now in the land o' the leal. . . . I hope to be in England in the Autumn. You may be very sure I shall find my way to Groombridge.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to his Eldest Son.*

'St. Leonards,
'*March* 9, 1892.

'It is of course not incumbent on you to go and see A. but it would be kind of you if you did, and my feeling is that if the Devil were dying—wish he was!—I should try and stretch a point and be kind to him for a season. And after all, it is hard for the poor thing to be abandoned by all her relations,—sisters, brothers, etc., because she has misconducted herself. I think if I were in London I would go, or I will even come up on purpose; and she abhors me more than she loves you. . . .'

Early in 1892 Baker withdrew his contribution to the "Badminton" volume. It had been Oswell's chief inducement in writing that his article was to appear side by side with that of one with whose views of sport and everything connected with it he was in complete accord. He had frequently referred to the fact with the utmost satisfaction, and with this incentive gone he did not care to publish, and tried to cancel the arrangement. Ultimately, however, he yielded, with considerable reluctance, to the solicitations of Baker, Mr. Longman and his eldest son.

*Sir S. W. Baker to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'Diabeeah "India,"
'Balliana, The Nile,
'Lat. 26 N.
'*March* 14, 1892.

'I was delighted to receive your letter yesterday, and to see that you will give your experiences of Big Game to the "Badminton Library"; without which it would probably be a poor affair. There is only one

man—Selous—who has had any lengthened experience of S. Africa, and he cannot be got at, as he is somewhere in the wilds of those parts; but no one now lives who has had such a study as was afforded to yourself nearly fifty years ago, before what is called "Civilization" drove all living creatures from the face of the earth. . . . I congratulate the "Badminton Library" upon securing your immense assistance. . . . I am quite certain of your success, as there will be a freshness in your writing and experiences that will be a great relief after the tedium of most books upon such subjects. . . . We have been deeply distressed to hear of poor Grant's death. He was one of our greatest friends, and yourself and myself are now the last of that generation of Africans.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to Sir S. W. Baker.*

'*March*, 1892.

'. . . I noticed the death of your friend, and only wonder that you, and even I, have escaped so often by as it were the skin of our teeth. I suppose we were left for better things, and I often feel sorry that I have not found mine yet. I fear my dear, grand old Mother, who lies buried not very far from you, in Tor Churchyard, would hardly feel proud of her son, and his useless life. Dear old lady! Your splendid example has not been enough followed by your son.'

*Sir S. W. Baker to W. Cotton Oswell.*

'I return your "Big Game" which has interested us all immensely. You underestimate yourself, my dear friend. I would much rather read your clear description than any of those modern accounts written for the sake of fine writing. . . . You will see on page 54 I took the

liberty of suggesting a footnote respecting the value of ivory at the present day. The relative price of hippo and elephant tusks has changed. . . . I had a letter from Webb of Newstead Abbey only a few days ago. . . . He will feel so pleased to think you remember his courtesy to yourself after so many years, and so warmly recognise it in your recollections of Big Game. . . . We met Agnes Livingstone on board the *Arcadia* in returning home from Egypt, and we talked much of yourself. . . . I hope you and Mrs. Oswell will let us know when you can bring Miss Oswell with you to pay us a visit. You have no idea what a pleasure this would be to us. . . . Very warm regards to her and yourself from us both, and congratulations upon the article "Big Game," which I think quite excellent.'

The following extracts from the article are interesting, as embodying the mature views on debated questions of the day of one who, after five years' close and intelligent personal knowledge of the country and intercourse with the Boers and native races, during the remainder of his life made Africa and things African a study:

'In the late very cool partitioning of Africa we may congratulate ourselves in having obtained possession of Mashonaland, a district healthy enough for colonisation and apparently rich enough to repay it. The tsétsé, that great enemy of the cattle-trader, will disappear before the approach of civilization and the killing off of the game, especially the buffalo, its standing dish, as it has done many times already in African lore.

'I am speaking of the tracts south of the Zambesi; of tropical lands to the north I know nothing save from what I read and am told, and I cannot yet see how they are to be settled. Fever and general unhealthiness must weight immigration heavily, and even if the country is capable of supplying the needs of the world in the future, what

philanthropic society will subsidize the workers until industries are developed? It must be remembered the greatest prophylactics in an evil climate are movement and its consequent excitement, and change of scene—the settler dies where the traveller lives. The railway, if made, will help to suppress slavery by giving carriage for the ivory. Through the vigilance of English cruisers this iniquitous traffic has been greatly reduced, and, but for the refusal of the right of search by the French, would be small and unremunerative; but the Arab curse still continues, and though now that the seaboard is partially occupied by Europeans, greater difficulty will be placed in its way, I am of opinion that through the avarice and cupidity of man—African and European—it will not entirely disappear so long as there is any ivory left. That once exhausted, is there anything else worth bringing a ten mile journey to the Coast? May the venture turn out better than many another has done, and not end in that very questionable blessing a rum-civilization!

'The influx of immigrants into Mashonaland, with the gold and diamond-seeking population further south, will in time tend to minimise the power of the Boers over the native tribes. Dutchmen are slow colonists and will not be able to hold their own with incomers in enterprise or, in a few years, in numbers or in power, and the evil influence they have at times exercised upon the black race will be at an end. I hope no worse *régime* may come in with the new rule.

'There were many good points in the Dutch farmers, and I think they compare very favourably with English squatters in other lands. Where antagonistic races are brought together, the minority, the whites, if they are to hold their ground, are almost inevitably forced, for very existence, to terrorize the black majority that would otherwise overwhelm them. I am not arguing that their conduct is moral or legal, but it has been, and will continue

to be the rule. We may hold up our hands in a Pharisaical way, and, when we are once secure, I grant we try to improve our subjects; but they must be our subjects first.

'Would Englishmen under similar conditions have done better than the Dutchmen? I think not. Without the pale of law they would hardly have been so much a law unto themselves. No doubt the Boers have many faults; and with respect to the native races have shown great cruelty—my contention is they would hardly have held their own without.

'We must not be too hard on them because they have twice got the better of us in the field. Englishmen have not forgotten Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill.

'Diplomatically too we were twice worsted; the Boers had very troublesome neighbours and sought the suzerainty of our Queen for their own ends; not by a unanimous vote I know, but there are "oppositions" everywhere, and at all events the seekers were the majority. The troublesome neighbours now we are masters call upon us to rectify the frontier line, which had been greatly encroached upon by the Boers. We refuse or delay to set matters right. Boers' troublesome neighbours become ours. The *Z*ulus are conquered with some difficulty and the Boers, relieved of their anxieties, demand and obtain the withdrawal of the suzerainty.

'This is not my opinion alone. The *Z*ulus were our fast friends till we refused to undo the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the Dutchmen—the whole story, including the withdrawal of our troops, is a page that one would like to tear out of our annals.'

In this connection an entry in Livingstone's Journal for 1853 will be read with amusement:

'Boers are very kind, and great rogues—have very small regard for the truth, and if one swears he is doing

you a favour, you may take his oath as meaning that he is cheating you. Their talk is entirely on *rixdallers, scaap, guilders, inthaalder, paarde, moi dick, wrowen,* etc. They are more like Jews than any people I know. They have respect for religion, but not enough to be religious themselves. . . . The follies of men make the world interesting. What a dull, drivelling affair it would be if the universe were regulated according to the dicta of heavy Dutch Predikants, for instance; who would not wish to escape from a chaos of everlasting humdrum !'

## CHAPTER XXII.

1892–1893. AGE 74–75.

A trip regardless of expense—Oswell gives his wife advance copy of 'Badminton' article—A splendid triumvirate—Herr Pauer—'Good friends for over forty years'—A seaman orphan—'Now is the time for a Bonapartist'—Democracy in England—'Bring them all up Romans'—Thoughtful kindnesses—Last illness—'My ideal gentleman'—Death.

AT the beginning of April, 1892, Mr. and Mrs. Oswell planned for their eldest son and younger daughter a rapid journey to Monte Carlo, and thence along the Riviera to Genoa.

*To his Eldest Son.*

'Your Mother and I have the *great* happiness of finding you both in means. I am truly grateful to you for coming into our request to be allowed to mark our advent into a semi-prosperity by giving our children pleasure. Now every one of them will have a trifle of our overflow. . . . Once for all, *don't spare expense* . . . first class everywhere and *good* hotels if it costs £50 more. We wish it to be a trip *regardless* of expense so far as comfort is concerned. . . . I trust you may enjoy yourselves thoroughly.'

*Journal, June* 3, 1892.—'A joy to mark this day with a white stone. My husband gave me his stories printed by Mr. Longman's kind permission in advance of their issue in the "Badminton Library." My desire is thus accomplished at last.'

The expectation of his wife's delight had been a daily pleasure to him since he began to write. He was as happy as a child in the thought of surprising her; and as soon as possible after this he gratified a long-cherished project by anticipating the whole of the proceeds of his article in the purchase of a new carriage, horse and harness for her.

*Journal, June* 17, 1892.—'General Fred Cotton and his brother-in-law Mr. Brooke-Cunliffe, William's Indian friends, came to spend a few hours. The General is eighty-five years old, Mr. Cunliffe seventy-six and William seventy-four. As I looked at them I thought it would be impossible to imagine three more splendid, courtly gentlemen; and as I listened whilst we sat at luncheon I wondered whether their delightful conversation could be excelled in Europe. I shall never forget this day.'

*July* 2, 1892.—'I went with Marion P. and L. to be present at their lesson from Herr Pauer. He is a grand specimen of a German, and William listens with great amusement to the girls' racy anecdotes of him.'

The following one specially pleased him. The professor was teaching a large class of girls and had occasion to speak a little sharply to one of them. She immediately burst into tears. 'Now,' explained he, 'in a class of girls if *von* veeps, *all* veep. So I led the young lady *very* gently to the door, opened it, and stood her outside on the mat. "If you *most* veep," I said to her, "veep there." And she vept no more!'

*To his Second Son.*

'*Oct.* 25, 1892.

'. . . I am dead lame with a strained knee, done first in days gone by, but that's not of much account as I'm getting on towards seventy-five, and shan't want legs so long as you will. The last of my old friends lies dying. You will remember Mr. Macleay by name, though you never saw him; well, he is eighty-one and the machine is pretty nearly worn out. I went up to see him last week, and am very glad I did so, for he was delighted to look at my old face. We have been good friends for over forty years, no thought or word having ever come between us, and the poor dying fellow took me in his arms and blessed me as Isaac might have Jacob. I never can allow that the latter deserved all the luck and kindness he got. Neither perhaps do I, but still I like it, and we were glad to see one another once more in this world. I went up again yesterday, but thought it better not to disturb him as the Doctor was expected . . . and the dear old fellow was rather feverish. I shall, I hope, run up one day this week, again, if he lasts, not that I can do any good, but if I give a momentary gratification I'm more than contented. . . . On Sunday afternoon I had to receive and entertain sixteen young fellows from the Technical Institute at Tunbridge Wells, who on the plea of being engaged the whole week asked to be allowed to come over here on that day. Your Mother kindly undertaking to find them tea, I gave my consent. They were intelligent, well-behaved lads, with a great capacity for tea, jam, sandwiches and cake, and I think they went away happy.'

*Journal, November* 23, 1892.—'We went for a delightful sojourn to our Maze Hill Terrace House, the dear Pharazyns, to whom William takes affectionately, with us. He particularly likes our friends and neighbours here and calls on them in all directions.'

Whilst he was staying at St. Leonard's in the early seventies one of his children came in, saying that he had met on the Parade a man who had told a pitiful tale of orphanhood, poverty and friendlessness. Oswell, with his invariable tender-heartedness, set out at once to relieve the sad case, and was highly amused to have pointed out to him as the poor sufferer an elderly seafaring character with a particularly cunning eye. To avoid hurting his boy's feelings, however, money and a dinner were promptly bestowed—the forerunners of many similar offerings; for this deep sea fisherman, unaccustomed to credence and sympathy, made the most of his one apparent convert, and on every subsequent visit to St. Leonards hove alongside as often as his conscience or instinct of self-interest permitted.

'1, Maze Hill Terrace,
'*Jan.* 16, 1893.

'The other day I met your orphan boy, looking more disreputable than ever—clothed in very old clouts. His nose has grown red and his hand shakes, and did I not know the rectitude of your foundling, I should say he drank something stronger than water. He knew me, he recognised me, that warm-hearted one, he addressed his grandfather by adoption, he made me his confidant, mentioned that the world was just what it was, that many he had known and loved had passed away, and that I was the only living being with whom he could now claim relationship. Need I add that his romance was worth a shilling to him for your sake? but exactly in a hundred and one yards he lost that shilling at a house into which he entered, I believe, on a teetotal mission! The old fellow's name is Ollier, and one of the best traits in his character is that whenever he gets drunk he goes to church, to the horror and scratching of the other worshippers, according to Dr. Wilson. . . .

'Was there ever a more rotten state of things even in

Denmark or the Argentine than in France over this Panama "swamp"? Democratic Government, education without restraint of religion, priests—that is, those in authority—of the lowest of the people, what could be expected? Now is the time for a Bonapartist or a Legitimist.'

*Journal, February* 5, 1893.—'Mrs. Pharazyn brought Mr. Arthur Mills of Bude to call. He is Sir Thomas Acland's brother-in-law and was a Rugby schoolfellow of William's. The meeting—the first since then—was most cordial and interesting.'

*February* 19, 1893.—'William rode seventeen miles to a funeral on our new horse.'

*W. Cotton Oswell to Sir Samuel Baker.*

'*March*, 1893.

'Nearly everyone is dead, the penalty we pay for living on. I am afraid the G.O.M. will get another short innings. Balfour made a mess of that Irish Bill, and from what I hear, the animus is against the Government, and the people desirous to try a change. It must be a short one, for there are two or three things the Gladstonians stand pledged to, which they can hardly redeem — Egypt, Ireland, and England's whole foreign policy. But before my sons are as old as their father there will be a democracy in England, and the old lady will be off on the canter to the limbo of Assyrian, Grecian, Roman, Spanish, etc., shows and pageants.

'There is the death in the paper of a poor fellow who came to consult me years ago *re* marrying a Roman Catholic, and bringing up the children. "Let all the girls be Roman Catholics and the boys Protestants," said I. "But there won't be so many." "You can't be sure of that," I rejoined. "Oh yes, old fellow, but she's not very

young." "How old?" said I. "Fifty-two," said he. "Oh bedad, bring them all up Romans!"'

*Journal, March* 31, 1893.—'W. and I called at the R.'s, who have lost their father. The burden of their lamentation was that William had not seen him just before his sudden death. We told him this when we returned, and missing him soon afterwards, found that notwithstanding the strained knee he had walked the two miles and sat an hour with the daughters because he could not bear to think the poor things were hurt.'

*April* 15, 1893.—'William paid a great many visits for me, as I was not well.'

Whilst his wife was ill he came and sat by her bedside, and very earnestly begged her to be more careful of herself for the future, 'for what would my life be without you?'

On April 24 he drove her to Tunbridge Wells, to save her walking the three hundred yards between the station and her destination, anxiously guarding her all the way from the keen wind. After patiently sitting outside a shop while an unready dressmaker was preparing to fit her, he came in to tell her not to hurry—he had something to do. She urged him to take the carriage to save his knee; but he would not hear of the possibility of keeping her waiting for it, and set off walking to the Infirmary to inquire after a sick Groombridge girl, hoping to be able to carry a cheering report to the man to whom she was engaged.

The Infirmary was some way off, and he was detained there for a long time. In hastening back to his wife he became much heated. On the way home he stopped to tell the young fellow the doctors trusted the girl might recover.

For the rest of the day he was particularly bright and cheerful. Some friends who called in the afternoon sat

spellbound by the interest and vivacity of his conversation. 'I really believe,' said one of them, turning to his wife, 'there is no subject upon which your husband cannot talk *well*.' She glanced round at him, and thought she had never seen him more vigorous and handsome; and she wondered whether anyone could guess he was only three days short of seventy-five. But he had taken a chill, and that night the too familiar symptoms of fever declared themselves, first the shivering, then the burning, then awful pain, not in head and jaw, as usual, but internally. Nevertheless, his life's instincts of unselfish care for others triumphed, and he was distressed by his inability to wait on his wife and himself, and apologised affectionately for the trouble he was giving her.

In the morning he scrawled from his bed a few lines to his eldest son, telling him to buy the handsomest turquoise ring procurable as his birthday present to her. The last thing he ever wrote was the cheque for this. The 27th was his seventy-fifth birthday, and she always kept hers on the same day. After giving the ring, he followed her about the room with his eyes full of amused satisfaction at her delight. Then he listened with great pleasure to some of his letters—from his elder daughter, his youngest son and Miss Pharazyn; but the one which interested him the most was from his second son in the Argentine. Since his departure in 1889 he had read and re-read every letter of his that arrived, verifying with the map each place he mentioned, and mastering each detail of description of the people, the country, the life, the war, the locusts. He was never tired of rejoicing that one of his boys was repeating his own earlier experience of being on horseback often all day. The letter described a journey across the Andes from Mendoza to Valparaiso. In 1855 he had gone over the same ground, and he eagerly looked forward to comparing notes.

There was no improvement next day, and a nurse was

sent for. Soon after she came his wife was brushing his hair, and as he laid his head back on the pillow, she laughingly said: 'Now you look beautiful!' 'Don't talk such nonsense,' he replied. 'What will nurse think of me?' 'Oh, sir!' she exclaimed, 'if you knew what I think of you you would be surprised. I once heard you lecture when I was a young girl, and ever since you have been my ideal gentleman!' An ideal gentleman. Yes, he was that—the truest, the best, the noblest, the tenderest, the strongest, the gentlest. *Rien n'est si doux que ce qui est fort.*

Kindly alive, marvellously active mentally and physically, he had always dreaded the possibility of a gradual decay of strength and faculties that would make him dependent on and a trouble to others. 'I pray God not to allow me to outlive my muscles and my brain,' he had said only a few weeks previously.

The prayer was granted.

When his summons came his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated.

In the gray dawn of May 1 he died quite painlessly, quite quietly.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

His friends' farewell—Their letters and memorials.

For three days a stream of reverent mourners passed through the room where he lay, to take a last look at the kind, noble, beautiful face, and say good-bye to him who had been the personal friend of each one of them. 'He taught me at the night-school all the readin' and writin' I know—so patient as he was!' said an old man. 'Ah, sir!' said a coachman, with the tears running down his cheeks, '*I* shan't never see again such a one as you was a-top and a-hind of a hoss.' 'He come and see my boy two and three times a day when he lay a-dyin," said a widow. 'I don't believe there's anythin' to *be* known about flowers as he didn't know,' said a gardener. 'Look at his doctoring!' said a mother. 'My little Georgie wouldn't never have pulled through if it hadn't been for the medicine the master kep' on a-buyin' for him; and he always brought it hisself.'

On the day of the funeral there was not standing room in the church for those who met together from far and near to show their love and respect.

The letters, too, which came bore their eloquent testimony. Extracts are given from a few—a very few.

*Major* ——.

'He was the one man I have met in all my life whom I admired from *every* point of view, and whom I often in my heart looked on as the model I should like, but felt

that I should never be able, to resemble. I wonder if there is any man, woman, or child that ever came across him, any mere drawing-room acquaintance even, whose heart was not glad to know him. . . . I can remember from my earliest boyhood that grand face striking me with its blending of manliness and sympathy. . . . Everyone must have thought, though they mayn't have said it, that he was a regular St. Paul—he could be all things to all men. . . . What a *good* man he was! . . . He was, or should we say *is*, one of those who though their earthly life is ended have still an active earthly influence.'

——.

'Alas! if the little lad had lived it was always my earnest wish to take him to Hillside, that he might realize, as his father did, all that is noblest and most beautiful in a man. . . . He would have loved the man who has been to me through life the ideal of highest chivalry.'

*Mrs. Livingstone Bruce.*

'Mr. Oswell was one of the very best men I ever knew, so *splendid* a man in every respect that I feel anything I could write about him comes far short of what he deserved. I remember him as far back as I can remember anything, in the early days in Africa, before my Father sent my brothers and myself to England. His kindness to us children on the long trek in the ox wagon from Kolobeng to Lake Ngami was never-failing. Trying to make the travelling less weary for us he was always devising games. Then there was his kindness to my mother. . . . What a noble heart he had! My Father's love for him was deep and strong, and he writes of him in his Private Diary "He was the kindest friend I had in Africa." I have taught my own children to love and reverence his memory.'

*Sir Samuel Baker.*

'The loss of my dear old friend Oswell makes me feel very sad and desolate. . . . We often talked of him as the finest specimen of all that was vigorous and lovable in a man.'

And elsewhere he writes:

'When death seized him it robbed all those who knew him of their greatest friend. His name will be remembered with tears of sorrow and profound respect. . . . His only fault was the shadowing of his own light. . . . All those who knew him regarded him as without a rival, and certainly without an enemy—the greatest hunter known in modern times, the truest friend and the most thorough example of an English gentleman. We sorrowfully exclaim, "We shall never see his like again."'

*Conrad W. Cooke.*

'Your most dear father, my old and dearly-loved friend, was the most lovable, noble, simple, manly character I have ever known in my life.'

*Captain W. Drury Lowe.*

'Your dear Father was always shy of speaking of *himself;* his conversation was of current events and always of those which were the most interesting—anything relating to science, discovery, etc. He had the most charming manner, and way of conveying knowledge, read a great deal, was a good linguist.

'He was a most tender-hearted friend, almost to a fault, and of a most lovable nature; a beautiful head and face—I should say he was faultless in appearance. . . . No one ever had a better, more valued, loved and respected

friend than it was my good fortune to have in him, and I feel the influence of it to this day. His form, his look, his words are with me still . . . the loving memory of a noble presence, heart and mind.'

*W. H. H.*

'I never saw your Father but that I left him with better aspirations and some intention of trying to follow his example of kindness and thoughtfulness for others.'

*Lord Rendel.*

'He carried as well as deepened the stamp of Rugby at its best. Fearless of soul and body, yet tender, kindly, gay; wise with a large experience, but utterly unworldly; I would, as an Etonian, give all the mere gentlemen Eton could breed, for a handful of such men as Oswell. Manliness without coarseness, polish without complacency, nobility without caste. May Rugby keep the mould and multiply the type.'

*Judge Hughes, Q.C.*

'Your husband was the hero of my boyhood, though my worship was not known to him, as I was quite a small boy and he the Admirable Crichton at the other end of the school. . . . I always retained a vivid memory of his splendid presence and used to look eagerly for the scraps of news of him in Africa which were in the papers now and then. You may fancy my pleasure when I came across comparatively full details in my researches for the "Life of Livingstone" which I wrote for Messrs. Macmillan, and found that but for him Livingstone could never have crossed the Kalahari Desert or have started on his famous journey which opened Africa to the European invasion, which seems now to be at flood. God grant

that our share in it, which seems likely to be by far the largest, may continue to be guided by such men as your husband. . . .'

——.

'He was all that was most brave, manly and true in a man, yet withal possessing a woman's tenderness and sympathy.'

*Lady Lees.*

'He has been my brother and my trusted friend for the best part of my life—the one to whom every one of us looked in time of trouble—whose place if I lived another thousand years could never be filled.'

*An Unknown Friend in the 'Nyassa News.'*

'Farewell! old "Nimrod of an earlier day,"
Since thou at last Dame Nature's debt hast paid;
Farewell! true-hearted OSWELL, friend of him
Whose name this country never will let die;
Perchance thou'st joined him now whom erst thou loved,
And loving, many a generous proof didst show
That LIVINGSTONE had won from thee strong hold
Of that a good man ever has to give:—
A heart from selfish, sordid aims set free,
That loves to cherish friendship when 'tis found
A friend who's true and constant, one well tried,
Not in the common stream of intercourse,
In waters smooth, where tempests are unknown,
But where the flood lies thick with dangers strewn,
When hardships must be borne, privations felt,
Where hazardous predicaments do tax
The large resource of men of noble minds,
'Twas there that thou, his comrade staunch, didst learn
To prove him as he provéd thee, and so
Thy heart was knit to his, and we were used,

Long while ago, to link thy name with his,
As that of one, full worthy then, as since,
Large room to fill in Livingstone's large heart,
Though being such an one 'twas not thy care
To bid for fame as friend of Livingstone.
Right well thou lovedst him! And in after days
Thine eye, so piercing keen, would kindle bright
Whene'er or Africa, or he, was named.
Full youthful still, unbowed by seventy years,
How many a tale thou hadst to tell of times
When, though thou recked it not, thy name was praised
As first and foremost of that hunter class
That scoured our Afric's arid southern plains
Where buffalo and elephant then learned
To dread the aim of marksman like to thee!
Thine was a joyous, glad old age whose light
Attracted those, who on that country side,
Where thou for years didst make thy English home,
Had learned to love the sunshine of thy life,
To court thy converse, and to visit thee
In that fair dwelling and its garden bright
Where roses, eglantine, and travellers' joy
Sweet harmony of fragrance and of hue
Diffused around, and revelled blooming there.
It was thy gift in early years, nor less
When green old age scarce shook thy stalwart frame,
To estimate thyself at value small
And so to seek beyond thyself, wherein
Thy heart might take delight and lavish love;
This was thy charm, that none who knew thee best
Could e'er resist; 'twas this that drew to thee
Not Livingstone alone, but scores of men
Who, now that thou hast gone, will mourn awhile,
And ofttimes sigh to think that thy full spell
Of years, so long drawn out, is broke at last!

'C. M.'

But the affection of his friends and neighbours did not find expression only in words. A happy instinct led them to join in giving the appropriate memorial of a drinking-fountain and cattle-trough close to his home, on Groombridge Hill.

Then a beautiful tablet was erected by the Royal Geographical Society and by friends of an earlier date in the church above the seat he had occupied so consistently for thirty-two years.

And Judge Hughes came forward with a plan which he carried through with his customary energy and infectious enthusiasm. He thus explains it to Mr. Arthur Mills:

'A few of Oswell's old schoolfellows and Indian and African friends are getting up the necessary fund for a picture of him to be hung in the new Big School (at Rugby) on Speech Day—June 23rd. As the man without whose help Livingstone could never have crossed the Kalahari desert, and so opened up Africa, he deserves to be one of the school heroes. Besides he *was* such a noble and gentle boy, one of the very few big fellows from whom I never got a hard look or blow in those rough days when I was only a small boy of eleven. You were just about his standing. . . . I am to read a short paper on him at the hanging, after speeches.'

The speeches lasted longer than had been anticipated, and Judge Hughes, in presenting the portrait, said only a few words, reserving his paper for the morrow, Sunday. A more charming, genial, warm-hearted appreciation was never penned or uttered, and surely no speaker ever had a more delightful, sympathetic audience than the five hundred young Rugbeians, who hung on the lips of the grand 'old boy' as he related the brave deeds of the hero of his sixty years ago schooldays.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

CHARACTERISTIC EXTRACTS FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE AND PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM COTTON OSWELL.

'THE more I wander the less I feel I have seen, and mountains always make me deeply sensible of this. On a plain much is taken in at a glance and you can fashion what you don't see from what you do; but not so with the glorious old hills. Every nook has something of its own worth seeking out, seeing and *feeling*.'

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'For the first time in my life—fact! I got a profile of myself, by chance, in the glass, and was quite overcome by my likeness to an exaggerated Aztec. I really didn't know how hideous I was before, and have studiously, ever since, kept my full face towards people.'

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'I wish most sincerely that you wouldn't think me so much better than I am, for it makes me feel what an impostor I must be. Systematic deception is the best of my qualities.'

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'Men look for a higher standard of purity from women than they offer them—perhaps you'll say they shouldn't, but we always do think one better than ourselves when we love, thank God! whatever our general opinion of the sex may be.'

'But when we like, don't we like faults at all? I think so. I can't imagine anything more humdrum and unlovable than an angel in starch and crinoline.'

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'Sacrifice generally, I'm afraid, implies victims. At all events it is not the proper basis for affection.'

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'What a mystery is a deathbed! I know one who is passing now calm, quiet and happy, as she says and looks; and yet her life—— Do the dying, think you, receive assurances denied to the living? Very few dying people wish to live; but here is one who without the stimulus of pain nearly *wishes to die*. The body is weakened, to be sure, but the mind is clear; so they can hardly be said to have waned together. How little we really know!'

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'I really believe I cannot *feel* so deeply as other people, that is things I cannot avoid. An overwhelming flood seems threatening me; some bitter waters pass over and about me; I feel the swell even of the giant waves, see how powerless, how useless, I should become if they swept over me—and then I shut them out. This is hard and unnatural, I suppose, but when trouble and misfortune can be avoided I think I'm the same as other people—very earnest in trying to prevent it.'

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'I may sometimes seem hard in manner but in heart NO—not if I know anything of myself. I would often check a painful expression of grief because I believe troubles are called into more active life by the mere fact of putting them into words.'

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'To be bright even in appearance when feeling sorrowful and downhearted is very hard, and it might be thought

hypocritical to try, but tryings are the bricks of the steps towards succeedings and must very often be made without straw.'

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'Little victories enable us to fight great battles with success. Indeed, so far as I know the little fellows give us all the trouble.'

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'No amount of talking can ever make wrong right. Peculiar interpretations of feelings and their consequent actions are sophistries which only obscure the otherwise distinct lines of right and wrong. Let us call wrong *wrong*, and not try to analyze away in ourselves what we should reprobate in others.'

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'I have seen so many strange things in my life that I now never *dis*believe anything.'

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'It is right to chance one's life or health to save or cheer others.'

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'For once in my life I can't convince myself that, except as a guide for the future, there is no use in looking back to what's past.'

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'No man can be a gentleman, in my opinion, who systematically hurts the feelings of another, unable, as he well knows, to retaliate. This, and assumption, always get my bristles up. There's hardly a pin to choose between them.'

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'I'm afraid I am always bitter against assumption of superiority, accompanied by the pretence that it's innate —the difference in the clay, heaven-sent—without any effort on the part, in fact rather against the will, of the

possessor. . . . Now Mrs. X. is the very worst type of overbearing assumption I know. I always wish, when I hear of or read anything from her, that she were a man, and I had the answering of her remarks. I am, I believe, considered in some matters too meek; but this sort of thing is always sufficient to overcome my *vis inertiæ*.'

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'I am glad to be rid of Mr. K.' (a tenant), 'for I have found him out in two or three dirty tricks—running down the house and furniture, and then under the assumed name of *a gentleman* approaching me through an agent and trying to buy them! All such ways I utterly abhor.'

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'Sneaking meanness always riles me more than open wickedness. But I am wrong to have shaken the reins on the neck of the steed of my wrath, and I should, under like circumstances, I dare say, have acted much worse.'

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'"Anything for a quiet life" is a mean aphorism, no doubt, but one in which abides much comfort.'

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'It is certainly my chief pleasure nowadays to try and help others—*à fortiori* my own children. . . . Would that I could do more!'

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'I think I can truly say my children are always in my thoughts, whatever they may be in expression.'

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'I return a case of cigars found in your room. I have taken three of them. If they are yours I accept them with thanks; but if they belong to anyone else, buy three of the best Havannahs you can, in their place.'

'Misfortune very often binds us closer to each other than good luck, and herein is shewn one of the many uses and the real richness of adversity and poverty.'

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William Cotton Oswell stood six feet in his boots; thin in the flank, square-shouldered, deep-chested, to the end of his life he had the muscular development and activity of an athlete, though he was so well proportioned and so spare that to a stranger his great strength and power of endurance were a revelation.

Early one morning in the autumn of 1868 he was roused by hearing voices in the orchard. Throwing on a few clothes, he hurried out, and came upon three men stealing apples. They promptly made off in different directions. He chased and ran down *each in succession*—a remarkable feat for any man under any circumstances, and the more so in this instance that the pursuer was fifty years old, and the pursued strong young fellows of between twenty and thirty.

'Found it a tidy load, didn't you?' inquired a carman, as his mate rejoined him after helping to carry a grand piano into a house. ''Tain't likely, is it?' was the reply. 'The master come my end, and you may 'pend upon it he took all the weight hisself.' 'The master' was then seventy-two!

A year later, on his shouldering a heavy box and carrying it up two flights of stairs, a cabman was heard to murmur: 'Well, I'm blest if that don't beat everything! You *are* a stiff un, and no mistake, you are!'

'Astounding!' exclaimed an old schoolfellow, as he watched him running half a mile to catch a train. 'Your father runs as fast, as lightly, and as well as he used when we were boys together sixty years ago. Seventy-four indeed! Why, he moves as if he were seventeen!'

To lift a sick person, or carry a fainting woman out of

church, was no apparent exertion to him. He did not know what physical fatigue was, and from morning to night was on his feet, out of doors if possible.

Of the perfection of his features and the beauty of his countenance there never was, and never could be, but one opinion. The form of his head and brow was extremely fine; his eyes were deep-set, and intensely blue; his nose aquiline, his chin short and square, his mouth very handsome and closely shut; his skin singularly smooth and delicate, and tanned from constant exposure.

The combination of strength, gentleness and kindliness in his face gave him an indescribable nobility of expression. 'I always feel the better,' said a friend to Mrs. Oswell, 'for looking at your husband's face. It appears to me to be the very soul of goodness.'

He had a wonderful charm and distinction of manner; the ease and polish were, no doubt, due to travel, and intercourse with society in many lands, but the foundation was humility, unselfishness, and consideration for the feelings of others. 'Mus Oswul,' said one of his humble admirers, 'is de sort of janleman as would find hisself jest as much at home in a nobleman's castle like as he is in any of our cottages.' But though he regarded extreme courtesy as the right of every man, woman, and child, he invariably acknowledged ordinary civility to himself as a favour.

It was a coveted honour to be taken in to dinner by him or to secure his presence at any entertainment, for he considered he owed it to his host and hostess to exert himself to the utmost to amuse their guests, and his wide reading and remarkable memory, his adventures and experiences, and his facility of speech, united to make his conversation most fascinating. 'No one,' says Sir Samuel Baker, 'could describe a scene more graphically or with greater vigour; he could tell his stories with so vivid a descriptive power that the effect was mentally pictorial; and his listeners could feel thoroughly assured that not

one word of his description contained a particle of exaggeration.'

Greediness or alimentiveness were peculiarly disgusting to him, and that the meal should be looked upon as the primary object when friends met, incomprehensible. Nothing condemned a man more in his eyes than attending to his own wants before those of every woman within reach had been satisfied. From being too intent on ministering to his neighbours he generally returned home hungry from any festivity, and then contented himself with a crust of bread and butter and a cup of tea. It is one of the earliest recollections his children have of him that at meals he always took whatever was least nice, and that if there was not much of some special dish it was allowed to pass him altogether. He ate very little, and very rarely drank anything stronger than water. When smoking in the evening, he had tea, and indeed was ready for a cup at any hour of the day. He was always fastidiously observant of how people ate or drank; and with his children he was in this respect minutely particular.

Though his voice was extraordinarily good, clear, resonant and powerful, his musical perceptions were practically nil. He used to say he knew two tunes; one was 'God save the Queen,' and the other wasn't! Not long after his marriage he and his wife stood at the window of their hotel sitting-room listening to a band playing the National Anthem. 'Now is your opportunity,' said she; 'what are they playing?' A pause, and then he hazarded, 'Rich and rare were the gems she wore.' Alas for the chief of the two tunes!

On the other hand, he was a capital speaker. With his innate shrinking from publicity or self-advertisement he avoided displaying his ability; but when compelled by circumstances to break silence he astonished and delighted his hearers by the grace, force, and humour of his speeches, which, without a single note or any preparation,

were delivered with an ease, a confidence, and a certainty of himself that nothing could shake. He was as free from self-consciousness or shyness before the most critical audience as when chatting with an intimate friend; it was inconceivable to him that a man could find any difficulty in speaking on a subject with which he was conversant, though he admitted it did require a certain natural or acquired aptitude not attainable by everyone, when called upon unexpectedly, 'to get up and talk about nothing.'

As a lecturer he was sought after far and near. Matter and manner were alike attractive, and these, with the faculty he possessed of picking up and utilizing local names, characteristics, politics or incidents, insured him breathless attention everywhere. 'We hadn't had nothin' to eat since lunch,' said the spokesman of a great party of lads whom he addressed one night, 'and we *was* hungry when we come in; but as soon as ever Mr. Oswell began to speak we forgot all about our insides, and never remembered them till he finished.' Africa, India, South America, the Crimean War, Foreign Missions, the Slave trade, natural history—whatever his subject, he was equally interesting, picturesque, and forcible. Ordinarily, jotting down a few leading words or ideas, to avoid diffuseness, was the extent of his preparation; but if he were not thoroughly master of some department he would work it up carefully to enable him to treat it in detail instead of confining himself to generalizations. 'I have,' he writes, 'to talk about beasts next Friday—more especially about elephants. Have they in your library Owen's book on these animals? I want some reliable information as to structure, etc. Any other *scientific* account would do of their dentition, species, varieties, etc. I would rather be correct if I make any statement.'

Though he extremely disliked this *talking*, as he called it, he never refused to undertake it when he thought it would give help or pleasure; nor would he ever accept

one farthing even for the actual expenses of the long journeys the requests often involved. He was always ready, too, to address a mothers' meeting, a gang of navvies, a school, a class of shop-girls, or to show his pictures, horns and weapons and tell his stories to anyone who asked, though the constant repetition must have been very irksome.

Most people recognised this, and were grateful accordingly; but occasionally the visitors felt the gratitude was due to them for taking the trouble to look and listen.

One Sunday a dull, stupid old man trudged up with a dull, stupid old friend. 'This 'ere's Mars' Tester,' he observed, indicating him with his 'bat.' 'Ah've brought

HORNS OF TAME OX FROM LAKE NGAMI.

13 feet 7 inches following curve; 8 feet 4 inches from tip to tip.

'um up to see the curiosities. Your pa'—and here he winked cunningly—'likes showing of 'em off, ye knaow, it 'muses of him.' And then, as the friend made his way into the house, he planted himself with a thud on a bench outside. 'Won't you go in too, Mr. Pilbeam?' 'Naow, Ah wun't. Ah've seen the things afore, and Ah don' warnt to see 'em agen.' The duties of hospitality demanded a further effort to provide congenial entertainment. 'I believe you have had a good deal to do with cattle, Mr. Pilbeam?' His eye brightened. 'Yaas, Ah *hev!* Man and boy Ah've lived among 'em for sixty year.' 'Very well, then, come with me, and I'll show you something that will surprise you.' He stumped after his conductor to the end of the dining-room, and was then bidden to turn and look at the enormous ox-head hanging over the sideboard. 'There!

you never saw such horns as that on any cattle of yours.' He paused a second, affecting to measure them with a contradictory, depreciatory eye, and then—*splendide mendax*—they were nearly fourteen feet long—with a dogged, 'Aye, but Ah *hev*, though,' he hobbled rapidly back to his seat in the porch.

Now and then someone would return thanks by forwarding or offering an object to swell the collection. The temptation held out in the following letter was, however, successfully resisted: 'As I have seen different curiosities in your home some time since I did not know whether you kept them and collected them as I thought if so you might like to add more, and I have got one, it is a kitten with two distinct bodies, two tails and six legs, but only one head. Dr. H. has seen it, and he says it is something marvellous and I ought to let someone have it that collects such things, as he says it is invaluable; if you do not collect please could you tell me of anybody. If you would like to see it you can. It is in a small case. If you were at —— I could tell you more, or if I knew when you were coming I could bring it down.'

Oswell read aloud admirably, and night after night, as his wife sat working, entertained her with the paper, travels, biographies, poetry, natural history, science. It was thus that his children were introduced to Shakespeare, Scott and Dickens. When they grew older he became the listener, and greatly enjoyed a good novel, or being told the plot, though, strangely enough, he never read one to himself throughout his married life. His favourite authors in fiction were Dickens, Scott, and Fenimore Cooper. Of Scott's novels he much preferred 'Guy Mannering,' 'Ivanhoe,' 'Peveril of the Peak,' and 'Quentin Durward'; and he considered the storming of Torquilstone, and the Lists of Templestowe the two finest scenes in all his works.

There were certain books of which he never grew tired; 'Cranford,' 'David Copperfield,' 'Barchester Towers' and

'The Pilgrim's Progress' were among these. The poets he liked best were Scott, Tennyson, Byron and Longfellow. For Browning, Swinburne and Rossetti he had no taste.

He was fond of reading his guests any short stories or passages that struck him, such as 'Suzette,' 'Miss Toosey's Mission,' 'The Three Sons,' 'Nothing to Wear,' 'Artemus Ward,' 'Happy Thoughts,' 'The Revenge,' 'The Grandmother,' 'The Northern Farmer,' 'Morte d'Arthur.' He used frequently to take part in Penny Readings, and never failed to receive an enthusiastic reception. Though, of course, his success was largely due to personality, he had a strong instinct of suitability, and was in consequence much consulted on the subject by his neighbours. 'Captain R.,' he writes, 'paid his visit with the book from which he intends reading on Wednesday. I cannot tell you or give you any idea of the unfitness of the stupid story, which is all in the Lancastrian dialect, and therefore only partly intelligible to me, and certainly, if read as written, utterly unintelligible to the Groombridge yokel. R. proposes to change Lancastrian into Sussex, and add or form jokes of his own as he goes on! The change, if effected, from one dialect to another, will spoil the fun, if there be any, which I have failed to detect, and, poor young man, his jokes will be very few, I fear. I feel quite sorry for him, and much as I dislike reading, would rather do all myself than have his feelings wounded.'

Once, after he had read Hood's 'Lullaby, oh Lullaby,' which describes, as everyone knows, an unfortunate father walking up and down all night with his baby, in the vain hope of sending it to sleep, a poor woman, who had listened with profound interest to his dramatic rendering, exclaimed, 'He read it, *too*, feelin', pore dear, like as if he'd done it hisself.' And indeed he had, for he delighted in his babies and took his share to the utmost in the trouble of them.

'I could not count the times,' writes his wife, 'that he has

insisted on my going to bed that he might sit up with any child of ours who was ill, and when several were sick that he has taken away whichever was worst into a separate room that the nurse and mother might be less disturbed with their respective patients.'

Writing to her in 1865 he says: 'My good friends are I hope glad to keep me, but though very happy here I shall be only too happy to be at home again for anything to induce me to stay a day beyond Monday. . . . No end of kisses to my little ones. God bless them and you, my darling, and keep you safe and well till I see you again. . . . The children here are very nice, but not at all likely to make me forget my own sweet little chicks for a single moment. Baby is pretty well, but not like ours.'

People who had known him only as a smart man about town were astonished, and sometimes rather shocked, to find that he nursed and doctored his children, helped to teach them, took them driving, and thought nothing of pushing the perambulator or leading the donkey. A few extracts from his daily letters to his wife, written during her rare absences from home, tell their own story:

'*Dec.* 10, 1866.

'All well, my dearest, though the house seems desolate without you. F. confided to me his fixed intention of "starving himself to death and never eating any more because mamma had gone away"; but I think he must have deferred his self-immolation till tea-time, for he has consumed a very fair amount of roast mutton and pudding, and seems cheerful in his mind. K. did not go to morning-sleep, and read, spelt and summed very nicely indeed. She rather complains that I don't make the figures or letters like Aunt Judy, which is, I suspect, probable, if her positive assertion be true that Aunt Judy always made her *h*'s and *f*'s with a fancy cornucopia running away from them as below, and her *z*'s somewhat in this form.'

'*Dec.* 11.

'F. begs me to tell you that he ate but *very* little dinner to-day, but as he partook, even to the disappearance, of a large plate of meat, and had three helpings of pudding, and wanted a fourth, I can say but little of his failing appetite.'

'1867.

'The little dears breakfast and dine with me, and I do not find them the least trouble. Now that they cannot very well go out, for there's a keen N.E. wind, I have established a new game in the hall, which we call "Battle." It consists of tremendous noise and a pelting with those soft worsted balls, amidst much yelling. We shall all I dare say be very glad to see you back, at least I know *I* shall.'

'1868.

'All the children are quite good. Yesterday our grand fishing excursion came off very successfully—twelve or fifteen caught—quite enough. It would have done you good to see little F. land his first fish. What between pride, fear and astonishment he stood mute and motionless, the pink blood running to his face, and looking so sweet that I was obliged to kiss him to break the spell. . . .'

'1869.

'I had H. out from 3.30-7.30 yesterday. The three elder children went to church in the morning with me, and I stayed at home and sent the servants in the afternoon. The children are all determined to write to you; I have not seen their letters. . . . H. begs me to enclose his production, which he assures me is like your writing, and according to his interpretation his hieroglyphics mean "You are quite well, my dear Mama, because you are." We are just going to commence lessons, so good-bye for the present; a line in the afternoon.'

'12.30.—Lessons done—too hot for much. All the party shelling peas in the shade; H. very great at it indeed! I really think little F. would be better without his back-hair—it makes him so hot. Shall I cut it off? He is at this moment a kind of small Riquet with the tuft, I having tied it up in a knob with a blue ribbon! H. really seems quite well; his appetite has nearly returned, and he is fresh and merry. He bruised his cheek against a chair—would have been fatal or nearly so if it had not been for calendula, so Offey says—or *thinks*, at all events!

'5.30 *p.m.*—I and Horsey and Waghorn have constructed a ship of original design in the orchard, but she is not yet christened, and the children know nothing about her.'

When his children were little, he made it a practice a breakfast to ask them, and encouraged them to ask him, questions in natural history, geography, geology, astronomy—any subject, indeed. They had no idea they were learning, and found great amusement in answering, and trying—never with success—to puzzle their father.

And when they grew older, there was only this difference, that they enjoyed learning in that way, and were amazed at the accuracy and universality of his knowledge. From cooking to Sanskrit, from the Nebular theory to the management of infants, from drenching a horse to translating the chorus of a Greek play—nothing ever came amiss to him; there appeared to be nothing he had not studied and mastered.

He welcomed and fostered any interest or pursuit of theirs, and assisted them energetically with their collections of eggs, butterflies, minerals, stamps, ferns, flowers, shells, autographs. 'If you are passing a good bookseller's,' he writes to his son, 'enquire for a standard work on birds, and its price. L. seems to take an interest in

them, and I should like to help her on. I do not expect to get what I want under 25/- to 30/-.'

He rarely praised or blamed in words, but his manner, to those who knew him well, was most significant of approval or disapproval.

Lying lips were an abomination to him. As soon as his children could understand anything—when they were mere babies—this was indelibly impressed on their minds. 'Be frank with me,' he would say; 'tell me all the truth, and, no matter what you have done, I won't be angry, and I will forgive you, but don't leave me to find it out.' And, hot-tempered as he was, not only did he never swerve from this promise, but disobedience, accidents, mischief, faults, freely confessed to him, always earned a 'Thank you, my dear.'

All children were devoted to him, and he was wonderfully fond of them *as such* rather than of individuals. Partly, no doubt, on this account, partly because it was his nature, he seldom showed his affection by demonstration or caress. But he never went down the hill without playing with all the little folks he met, and apples, biscuits, nuts, and the like, were regular items in Mr. Killick's book. There is an entry of oranges and sweets on the day before his last illness began.

He loved animals as if they were personal friends—horses and dogs especially—and his dogs loved him as only dogs can. Cats, too, were greatly attracted by him. One, a wild, savage creature, which lived in the stables, and would not go near anybody else, used to watch for his coming out in the morning, dash to him, and spring upon his shoulders, where it would lie perfectly happy as long as it was allowed; while indoors another occupied the same position at meals, and his knee on other occasions, unless anticipated by a child or a dog.

He was abundingly generous of his time, trouble, money, flowers. Meanness or stinginess were as impossible to him as theft or cruelty, and *giving* as natural

and necessary as breathing. He made the acceptor feel that in taking he was conferring, not receiving, a favour. 'I wish you could understand,' he writes to one of his sons, 'that to some people giving is *nothing*, but the being refused gall and wormwood.' In every business transaction he was a loser, from the dread of the possibility of becoming a gainer at another's expense.

No one who saw the happiness it was to him at Christmas-time to start out with his pocket full of silver for distribution right and left, could fail to be touched, and wish for his sake that his means were as unlimited as his desires. 'Give him a shilling and let him go,' was his most unpractical panacea for a hungry-looking beggar.

Without fear himself, he had an enthusiastic appreciation of fearlessness in others. 'Does the poet,' he writes on December 17, 1866, at the time of the Barnsley collier disaster, 'who told the tale of the Charge of the Six Hundred in such stirring manner that men, while they read it, feel their spurs driven home, and their right hands clenched, want another theme of manly daring? Let him stand over that dark pit at Barnsley and watch those splendid fellows, emulous of risking their lives to save their mates. *Downward* was to the full as gallant a shout as *Onward*, and as gallantly responded to; and the battle in the dark, amongst the stifling gases of the mine, was surely as nobly done as the charge in sunlight, amidst the smoke of cannon, at which all the world wondered.'

Love of sport—real sport—and of outdoor games and athletics was deeply ingrained in his nature from childhood upwards. He had himself borne a brilliant part in them, and he used to follow with the utmost interest the reports of racing, rowing, boxing, sailing, coursing, cricket and billiards. But he cared nothing for football, polo, golf or fishing, and heartily disliked *battue* and pigeon-shooting and tame-deer hunting.

Though slow to suspect that offence was intended, when once convinced of it he resented and corrected it so

vigorously as to render a repetition from the same source quite inconceivable. The slightest affront offered to the women of his household stirred him to his depths. In April, 1893, when he was just seventy-five, he heard that a neighbour's servant had spoken insolently to one of them. Within half an hour he was at his friend's house, and, on explaining the circumstances, obtained permission to deal with the matter himself. When the man came into the room he very quietly detailed the information he had received, and as quietly demanded whether or no it was accurate. Deceived by appearances, the servant rather flippantly admitted it to be so, and began justifying himself. It was the spark to the train. Oswell leaped to his feet and blazed out with such fierce indignation that the offender stood aghast and terrified. 'I never in my life saw anything so *overpowering* as your father's anger,' said the friend afterwards.

It was well recognised by everyone who knew him that he was willing and fully able to take the law into his own hands should necessity arise. An occasion of his doing so when he was past seventy reached the ears of an old tradesman, an acquaintance of thirty years. 'Just what I should have expected of him,' he exclaimed, rubbing his hands ecstatically; 'just the very thing. I *am* pleased, and no mistake. I don't forget that the Bible says, "If a man smite you on one cheek, turn to him the other"; but that's Bible wisdom, that is—not common-sense. My motto is, If a man smite you on *one* cheek, you smite him on *both*. That's worldly wisdom, depend upon it; and Mr. Oswell, you see, he agrees with me.'

But apart from occasions when he did well to be angry, it must in honesty be confessed that his temper was always too hasty and hot; and though generally strongly controlled, sometimes violent. But the invariable full and humble—too humble—apology followed so quickly on the outburst as not only to insure forgiveness, but to create an irresistible feeling of affection and respect.

Before starting for a drive one day he spoke extremely vehemently to a groom who had disobeyed his orders. Persuaded that he had said too much and put himself in the wrong, he turned back and begged the man's pardon. 'I'll stay with you, sir, as long as I live!' he cried.

He was not without prejudice and a certain hardness of judgment and expression when traits repugnant to him branded, as it were, a man or woman; but, like all strong natures, he was absolutely free from obstinacy, and always ready to listen to remonstrance, and on good grounds being adduced, abandon his hostile attitude; and he would then try to repair any harm he had done, by telling the people who had heard his opinion that he had modified it, and considered he had spoken unadvisedly with his lips; and by making or seizing an opportunity of showing marked deference and attention to the injured person.

Perfectly indifferent to rank and title as such, he was keenly alive to gentle inheritance. 'Ah! but you must remember he hadn't a grandfather,' was a familiar excuse or explanation on his lips, and, as he thought, an ample one for a discourteous or unhandsome action.

He had the strongest objection to the modern flat-chested, emancipated, tailor-made woman, and was very strict on the subject of adequate chaperonage and attendance for girls. He held equally decided views that boys should be independent and self-reliant from babyhood. Effeminacy and unmanliness were the vices he hated most in the world. It was his creed that a man should be able to bear any pain, trouble, worry or privation, without murmuring; act in any emergency, go out in any weather, walk any distance, eat anything, sleep anywhere; and he was unmerciful to petting, coddling, or talking about one's self. Himself the least fidgety of men, he was quick to notice, and impatient of, personal tricks; while slippers worn downstairs, lolling on arm-

chairs and sofas, smoking during active exercise and riding with the hands up, were sure to provoke energetic adverse comment from him. Gloves, overcoats and umbrellas he regarded as necessary evils—for others—most rarely using them himself.

The extent to which he *pervaded* the house and the lives of his family is quite indescribable. Because he claimed little as master and head, he was accorded much. Every single thing was referred to him—a letter, a difficulty, a trouble, a plan, a dispute, a pain, a cut finger, a present; and to everything, whether small or great, he brought to bear the most patient, careful, sympathetic attention and excellent judgment.

His inner life—the underlying factor of the love, confidence, and reverence he inspired—was so hidden, so sacred, so simple, that much cannot be said of it; but no new departure was ever undertaken without special prayer—his boys going to school, his children abroad, the laying of the first stone of Hillside, the first evening there; every day without fail directly after breakfast he read the Lessons aloud to his family and any guests who cared to remain; and, wet or fine, he was always at morning and afternoon service on Sundays.

In his horror of anything approaching display, and of the very faintest tinge of hypocrisy, he perhaps carried too far his unwillingness to *speak* on religious matters; but, on the other hand, his steady *action* was an effective sermon. His daily visits to his poorer neighbours, the help given, the food sent, the books lent, filled so large a place in his life that they were unavoidably alluded to in general conversation; but of the deeper ministering he spoke only to his wife, and then most rarely; the extent of it will never be known, though much has come to light incidentally since his death. For many years—the larger part of his married life—it was one of his great pleasures every Sunday evening, when guests and children had gone to bed, to listen to a sermon read by his wife—one of Robertson's generally.

For the originality and manliness of these he had a profound admiration. They suited the tolerance and sincerity of his unscientific religious views, which are admirably portrayed by himself in the following letters, written in 1888 and 1890:

'After taking his degree, H. talks of six months at Cuddesdon. This I am sorry for, though I shall not interfere between a man and his conscience; but trust that as there are many ways to the same place—for this I thoroughly believe—his, which is *ultra* High Church, may land him safe. . . . You all consider me a very Low party, but you are all mistaken. I don't believe in the Real Presence, auricular confession or priestcraft, but eliminate these, and I am with you. An old-fashioned Churchman, I don't like too much singing and chanting, because I don't understand it, but have no objection that others should enjoy it to the full. The tenets of the so-called Low Church I utterly dislike; more if possible than I do the *ultra* High fads. At present I hardly think H. has soberly thought the matter out, but before he takes orders I trust he may do so, and ascertain by self-examination whether he is advisedly accepting an office he feels *called* to. I don't mean in the cant phraseology, but a man ought to be seriously certain before he takes hold of the handles of the clerical plough.'

'The more I see of the Extreme Church the more I regret that any man's life should be so much bound up in, as I think, the most non-essential trifles. . . . Surely there must be a mean somewhere. Does Salvation only belong to stoles, chasubles, and ritual; or vest in sudden conversions and abusing every other kind of religionists except your own clique?'

Surely there is such a mean, and surely he has found it who leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing which

is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart; who hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour, and hath not slandered his neighbour; who setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes, and maketh much of them that fear the Lord; who sweareth unto his neighbour and disappointeth him not, though it were to his own hindrance; who has made it a law unto himself to rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep; to be not slow to visit the sick, and the fatherless and widows in their affliction; to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Such a man was William Cotton Oswell; his life was his religion—pure religion, and undefiled before our God and Father; for he was a good man—a man greatly beloved.

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